

Examining the potential impact of telemedicine for medication abortion programming and policy changes on abortion accessibility in the United States

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New research shows that telemedicine for medication abortion (TMAB) policy and programming changes could dramatically increase abortion accessibility in the United States. This study's findings underscore that telehealth service delivery models could greatly improve people's ability to obtain desired abortion care, which is increasingly important in the post-Roe era.

Key findings

The study examined how hypothetical changes to TMAB policy and programming could reduce drive times to obtain abortion care. Investigators found that removing all state TMAB bans, as well as expanding site-to-site TMAB services to all Planned Parenthood clinics, could result in over 3.5 million additional reproductive-age U.S. women living within 30 minutes of an abortion-providing facility.

How would Wisconsin benefit from policy and program changes to TMAB?

- In 2018, Wisconsin had a TMAB ban in place.
- That year, 40%, 60%, and 75% of reproductive-aged Wisconsin women lived within a 30-, 60-, and 90-minute drive time of an abortion-providing facility, respectively.
- Investigators found that, if TMAB were available at all Wisconsin Planned Parenthood health centers, those figures would have increased to 67%, 85%, and 93%.
- In a 2018 context, removing Wisconsin's TMAB ban and expanding TMAB's use to all Wisconsin Planned Parenthood health centers would have made abortion accessible to over 250,000 additional people, even with other state-mandated restrictions in place.

Public health implications

- Numerous studies have shown that the TMAB model is safe and effective.
- This study demonstrates that removing medically unnecessary TMAB bans and expanding use of site-to-site TMAB could dramatically increase access to abortion care.
- However, even with these changes, abortion care would remain out of reach for many, especially since the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* has made abortion even less accessible.
- Expanding telehealth models for providing abortion is one critical aspect of increasing abortion access overall—more important than ever as states including Wisconsin lose access to most legal, local abortion care.