

CORE BRIEF

What it costs Wisconsinites to obtain abortion care in the post-Roe landscape

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In this brief, we outline costs of seeking an abortion for Wisconsinites in the post-*Roe* landscape. Our analyses demonstrate the everyday impacts of restricting access to reproductive healthcare.

How do Wisconsinites obtain abortion care?

Abortion in Wisconsin is no longer available since the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned the abortion access protections of *Roe v. Wade*. Wisconsin reverted to an 1849 law that makes providing abortion a felony crime. All abortion clinics in the state have stopped offering services while the courts determine whether the law is enforceable.

Before *Dobbs*, abortion access was already [heavily restricted](#) in Wisconsin. The new landscape puts abortion care out of reach for even more Wisconsinites. Some Wisconsinites are likely [self-managing](#) their abortions after sourcing medications online, and many are attempting to [travel to bordering states](#) where abortion is still legal. For most of the state population, the nearest reproductive healthcare centers offering abortion care are in the Chicago, IL area, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, Duluth, MN, and Marquette, MI. Traveling to these clinics requires additional planning, time, and healthcare systems navigation — and generates additional costs.

[Research shows](#) that financial barriers are one of the most frequently cited reasons people can't access abortion services. These additional expenses will make it harder, if not impossible, for many Wisconsinites to access abortion care.

The costs – medical fees and much more – add up for Wisconsinites

[A comprehensive analysis](#) showed that as of 2020, in the Midwest, a medication abortion cost around \$550, a first-trimester in-clinic abortion cost around \$625, and a second-trimester in-clinic abortion cost around \$820. If a patient has medical complications that require hospital-based abortion care, these costs quickly expand into thousands of dollars. The cost of the abortion procedure is rarely covered by health insurance. In Wisconsin, state law prohibits Medicaid (BadgerCare), plans offered on the state's Health Exchange, and insurance plans for state employees from offering abortion care coverage, even though these plans cover prenatal care and birthing costs.

But out-of-pocket costs are not limited to medical fees. Even before *Dobbs*, [most abortion patients](#) incurred additional expenses beyond paying for the abortion itself — such as transportation, child care, and missed wages for those without sick leave.



Reproductive healthcare centers offering abortion care in neighboring states

Below we estimate the total cost to obtain an abortion for three example Wisconsin patients. We calculate costs based on published sources such as [AAA](#), [Amtrak](#), and [care.com](#); we calculate missed wages based on [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) wage data. Detailed calculations are available [on request](#).

Abortion Expenses for Patient A Eau Claire → St. Paul, MN Early second trimester (17 weeks) In-clinic procedural abortion Student / dishwasher	
Medical fees	\$820
Other expenses	
Travel (bus, Uber)	\$70
Hotel (3 nights)	\$192
Missed wages	\$131
Total	\$1,213

Abortion Expenses for Patient B Milwaukee → Waukegan, IL 1st trimester (8 weeks) Medication abortion Hair stylist	
Medical fees	\$550
Other expenses	
Travel (car)	\$74
Childcare	\$214
Missed wages	\$246
Total	\$1,084

Abortion Expenses for Patient C Door County → Marquette, MI 1st trimester (10 weeks) Medication abortion Agricultural worker	
Medical fees	\$550
Other expenses	
Travel (car)	\$312
Hotel (1 night)	\$84
Missed wages	\$575
Total	\$1,521

Putting these costs in context

These costs, which exceed \$1,000 in each scenario, present significant hardship for many Wisconsinites. Nearly 40% of adults in the United States could not cover an [unexpected \\$400 expense](#) without going into debt. [One study](#) showed that the costs of just the abortion itself would be catastrophic for the *average* Wisconsin household.

At least 10% of Wisconsinites [currently experience poverty](#), and as many as one in four (24%) experience some degree of [food insecurity](#). And yet, due to many structural factors, the people most in need of abortion care disproportionately experience poverty and financial scarcity. [Research documents](#) that 75% of abortion patients have low incomes.

While this brief focuses primarily on monetary costs, we remind readers that financial costs are not the only burdens faced by abortion seekers. Even without the additional costs, encountering barriers to abortion can psychologically tax people, especially those who need to travel out of state. [New research](#) documents that being forced to leave one's state for abortion care causes significant emotional burdens in the form of stress, anxiety, and shame. These emotional costs are even more significant for those forced to disclose their abortion due to travel or those stigmatized by in-state denial of care.