

We Are Still Having Abortions

All Across the Country

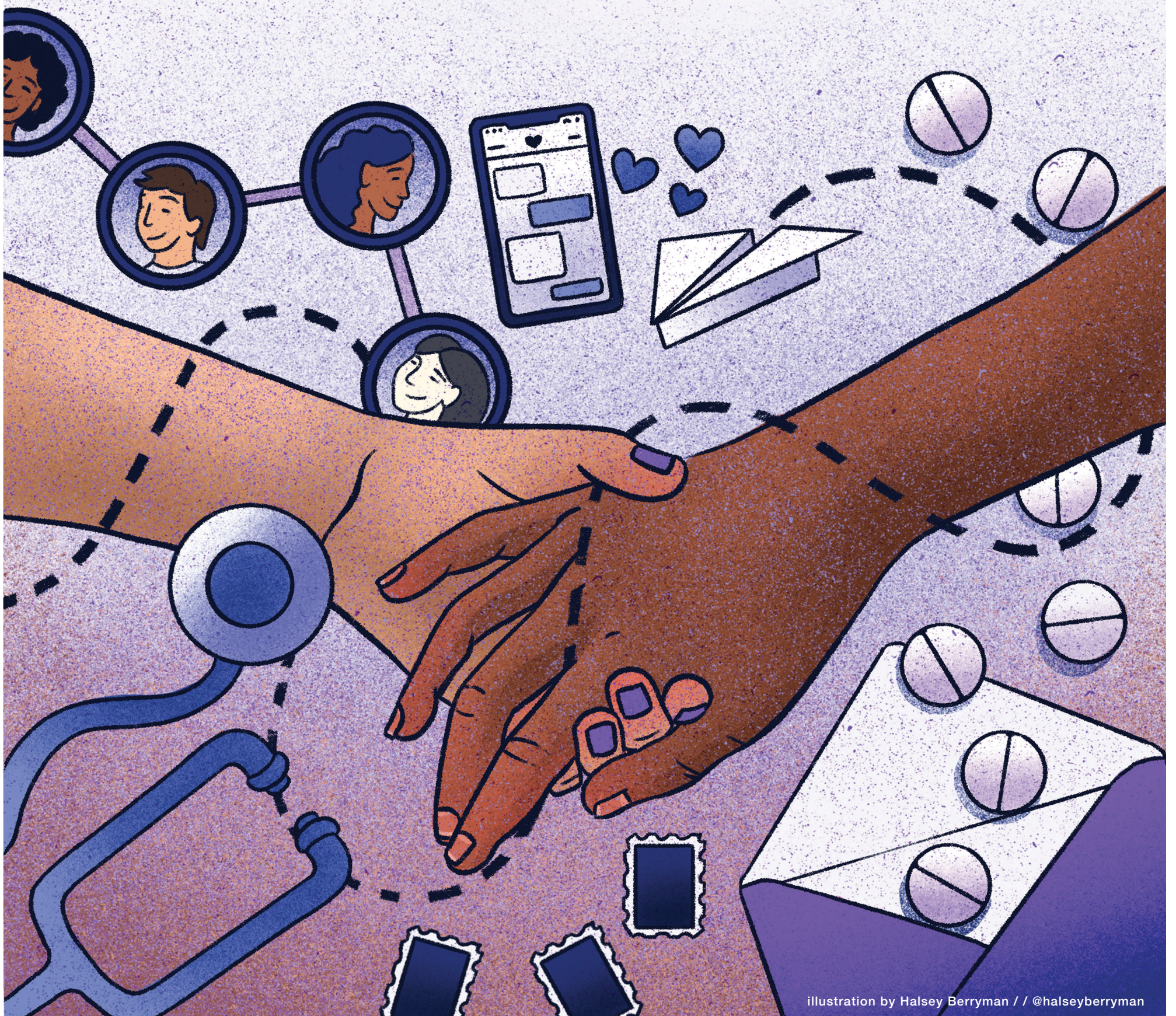


illustration by Halsey Berryman // @halseyberryman

It's been one year since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned and 14 states moved to ban abortion. Abortion bans and restrictions are designed to shame people and make abortion hard or impossible to access. But we are powerful. **And we will persist.**

Need Help?



Abortion Care Network
WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

Abortion Care Network
www.abortioncarenetwork.org

National association for independent community-based abortion care providers and their allies.



ARC
southeast

ARC Southeast
www.arc-southeast.org

The Access Reproductive Care – Southeast healthline supports callers in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

If you would like to request financial assistance or practical support (rides, lodging, or escorting), please give us a call at (855) 227-2475.



Indigenous
Women
Rising

Indigenous Women Rising
www.iwrrising.org

Our abortion fund is open to all Native and Indigenous people in the United States and Canada who have the capacity to become pregnant and are seeking an abortion in the United States.

Call or text our warm line: (505) 398-1990 to get more information.



M+A
HOTLINE

M + A Hotline
www.mahotline.org

The Miscarriage and Abortion Hotline

If you need information or support to self-manage a miscarriage or abortion, call or text 1-833-246-2632.



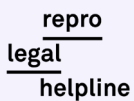
National Network of Abortion Funds
www.abortionfunds.org

Abortion funds help people get the abortions they want and need. Search for an abortion fund in your area.



New Voices for Reproductive Justice
www.newvoicesrj.org

Dedicated to transforming society for the holistic health and wellbeing of Black women, girls, and gender expansive people.



Repro Legal Helpline
www.reprolegalhelpline.org

Have questions about abortion laws in your state? Get free and confidential legal information and advice at 844.868.2812.

A Texas Single Mother's Abortion Story

“It's like the system is set up to fail mothers. We can't survive like this.”

As told to **Andrea González-Ramírez**

Originally published by *The Cut* on January 20, 2023

On the eve of the 50th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, which the Supreme Court overturned last year, only two options remain for one in four women of reproductive age in 14 states if they wish to terminate a pregnancy: seek care out of state or self-manage their abortion. This month, a single mother in her 20s living in Texas, whom we'll call Alauni, chose to take abortion pills at home and in secret.

A trio of overlapping abortion bans has made terminating a pregnancy illegal in Texas except in instances of narrowly defined medical emergencies. There are steep legal and financial consequences — up to life in prison in addition to a civil penalty of no less than \$100,000 — for anyone who performs an abortion or helps an abortion seeker. And while the law explicitly forbids criminalizing abortion seekers, that hasn't stopped Texas prosecutors in the past: A few months before *Roe* was overturned, 26-year-old Texan Lizelle Herrera was charged with murder for allegedly self-inducing an abortion; the charges were dropped after a nationwide outcry.

Given these risks, Alauni spoke with the Cut under the condition that we publish her story under a pseudonym and asked that we not disclose how she obtained the abortion pills. She shared her abortion experiences, her fear of being forced to continue an unwanted pregnancy, and her frustrations with a system that is not set up to support mothers like her.

My first thought was, Oh shoot, not again, but I kind of already knew I was pregnant. I had taken a Plan B, but I just felt like it wasn't going to work because I did take it a little over 24 hours later. I knew immediately that I wanted an abortion. I don't think I want any more kids after how many I have now. I was thinking, I literally just bought this new car, and it's only big enough to fit the kids I have. I just moved. If I had another kid, I'd have to move again to have space for that child. I can afford most of the things that I do now, but if I have another child, I won't be able to do that. It would change my life drastically.

Self-managing was my only option because of the laws in Texas and the risk of traveling. I found out around Christmas as well. Money is always tight around Christmas, especially when you already have kids. I didn't even have to crunch any numbers — I just knew I was going to have to self-manage at home.

Abortion just goes into a whole bunch of other topics. Prices have gone up on everything: diapers, formula, wipes. If you can't afford formula, then you look like a bad parent because you can't afford to feed your child.

I took the first pill at 7 p.m. and then the second one the next day at 7 p.m. I've had an abortion before. It was really exactly the same as my previous abortion, other than when you do it at the clinic, you take the first pill at the clinic and the second one at home. Some women say the cramps are really bad for them, but I think I have a higher pain tolerance than a lot of people. I took ibuprofen because I knew that cramps would come with it. The bleeding lasts a while, but if you've had periods before, it's almost like that — a little more than normal, but there's nothing that I'm concerned about.

In Texas, it's not safe for you to even go to a doctor or to the hospital if you suspect that you're pregnant. Once they get that information, if you just miscarry, or lose the baby out of nowhere and don't report it, you can be investigated for it. It's scary. And if you travel out of the state to have an abortion, you can still get in trouble for it. It's like you're taking a bigger risk traveling and getting caught than just self-managing. Being at home is easier; you're where you're most comfortable.

It's also very frustrating — you are forced to hope for the best but get prepared for the worst. In a month, I will take another pregnancy test. And if it's not negative, I'll make sure the lines are getting lighter. Just keep taking tests until they go negative. I need to stay on it to make sure that the pregnancy was actually terminated, and I'll go from there. Hoping for the best is hoping that self-managing was successful. But in case it wasn't, I'd have to prepare myself to get ready for whatever life has for me at that point.

Under the current laws, it's scary to know that you may be forced to go through with an unwanted pregnancy. Now we'll have higher cases of kids in foster homes, of babies being found in dumpsters or being left outside fire stations and hospitals. There was even a girl here that killed herself because she didn't want to be pregnant. Women are doing these extra things that they shouldn't have to, and the simple solution is just us having that access to abortion.

It's almost like it's a war on women, because men have it so easy. They can have a hundred babies in one year and not have to be held responsible for them, but women are left to be held responsible for them. I'm a single mom. My children's fathers, they're on child support, but neither of them pay. I have to do everything by myself. It's scary to know that if I get pregnant again that the dad may not want to be involved in the kid's life and it will all be left on me.

Then when we need help — food stamps or WIC for baby formula or diapers — it makes us look unfit, as if we cannot take care of our children or we are bad moms because we can't afford it. It's embarrassing whenever we have to go ask — go beg for help and get denied. Other things fall along with that as well. You have to worry about CPS getting involved — I've actually had to deal with them at one point. It's just so much that comes with being a parent. Bringing a child into the world is a bigger responsibility than a lot of people think.

When you're living off one income, it's really hard — especially when you need assistance, but the assistance tells you, “Oh, you make too much, so we can't help you.” Yeah, I may make “too much,” but I have all these children I have to care for. I have to make that much in order to care for them, but I'm still barely making it. The average right now for one kid in day care is about \$200 a week. If you have multiple kids, that's hundreds and hundreds of dollars. My rent is \$1,300. If I'm paying that much in day care, and \$1,300 in rent plus expenses, I would be forced to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and never be around my kids. Then at that point, you would be neglecting your children, which you can also get in trouble for.

People have told me, especially after sharing my first abortion story, “Oh, you did it because you're irresponsible,” or “You're selfish.” If I was irresponsible, I would've kept the baby — and that baby would have suffered.

Abortion just goes into a whole bunch of other topics. Prices have gone up on everything: diapers, formula, wipes. You can get on WIC, but you have to qualify for it. If you don't qualify, you have to buy formula. Formula is expensive. A lot of mothers can't breastfeed or don't have the time to breastfeed, because they have to still maintain their home; they have to maintain a job. If they have other children, they still have to attend to those children as well. If you can't afford formula, then you look like a bad parent because you can't afford to feed your child. It's like the system is set up to fail mothers. It's just not fair. We can't survive like this. It's hard.

People have told me, especially after sharing my first abortion story, “Oh, you did it because you're irresponsible,” or “You're selfish.” If I was irresponsible, I would've kept the baby — and that baby would have suffered. If I was selfish, I would've kept that baby — because I wouldn't have been able to care for that child like the child should be cared for.

At the time of my first abortion, I was not financially stable to bring another child into the world. I had just had a baby, and I was dealing with a lot of physical abuse from their father. It was just not right for me to bring another child into the world at the time. I went to New Mexico. It was four and a half hours away. Organizations helped with lodging; they helped with gas. Then getting there and still having to pay a difference for my abortion — out of nowhere, they were able to come up with even more funds to cover it fully, so I was able to have a little bit of extra money in my pocket. The process at the clinic was so smooth. Everyone there was so nice. The experience was just beyond perfect; it was amazing having all that support from the organizations. Then going back home to that situation I was in ... Going back was traumatic.

But that first abortion allowed me to be where I'm at today. I am more financially stable than I was then. If I had to have another child at that moment, I feel like it would've set me back so much further because I was already in a bad position. Everyone's situation is different. Some women may have medical issues. Some women may just not be in the right position at the time but want children later on in life. Some women may never want children at all. If a woman has an abortion, she should not have to explain why she had that abortion to anyone. That should just be a right that she should have.

I know that I'm not the only one who is having to go through this: having to self-manage or find a way to self-manage. We can't get help from anywhere else. We have to help ourselves.

What’s In Your Bag?

A crash course in what to pack for your procedure.

The We Testify Storytellers

Preparing for an abortion appointment, especially if it involves travel, requires more preparation than you might think. To ensure a smooth and comfortable experience, there are various items you may want to bring along. Though experiences vary, the We Testify storytellers agree that if they’d known then what they know now, they would’ve packed very differently. Here are a range of items that can enhance your abortion appointment, from practical necessities to comforting essentials!

Pre-Travel Planning

- **Abortion Travel Considerations:** If traveling for an abortion, familiarize yourself with practical support funds and abortion funds that can provide assistance. They can help arrange childcare if needed and offer guidance throughout the process.
- **Download Your Maps:** Traveling to a new place can be so confusing—especially in the rush of an airport or train lobby. Familiarize yourself with airport or train directions before you’re traveling so you know where you need to go and how to get there quickly and early. You can download the local map of the clinic’s city in offline mode on Google Maps for easy navigation.
- **Important Contact Numbers:** Save the clinic’s contact number, abortion fund helpline, your case manager’s direct line, and any emergency contacts in your phone for quick access when needed.
- **Pack Early:** Things can change quickly, so try to pack your bags ASAP so that you’re ready to go if anything changes, such as you get an earlier appointment or you’re running late, and you need to be on the move in a hurry.

What To Wear

- **Cozy Clothes:** Wearing cozy clothes like soft pants and loose shirts will keep you comfortable during your appointment and recovery, especially if there are unexpected delays or extended waiting times. Consider wearing soft pants, comfortable shoes, and packing pajamas. Remember, you’re traveling for a few days, so bring things to wear each day and maybe an extra pair of undies or two in case you get a spot of blood on a pair.
- **Sunglasses and Hat:** These accessories can provide privacy and shield you from any unwanted attention or disruptions at an abortion clinic, especially in situations where protests may occur.
- **Sweater:** Bringing a sweater ensures that you stay warm in potentially chilly clinic settings or during air travel.
- **Mask:** COVID is still very real, so bring a mask to wear inside of the clinic—it also doubles as privacy protection from anti-abortion protesters outside of the clinic.

Staying Fed, Hydrated, and Medicated

- **Water Bottle:** Staying hydrated is important, especially during longer wait times. A reusable water bottle will keep you refreshed and comfortable.
- **Pain Relief:** Consider bringing over-the-counter pain relievers, like ibuprofen (not aspirin!), in case you experience any discomfort or cramps. Special gummies are good for this too! :)
- **Period Pads:** No matter what kind of abortion you have, there will be blood. Bring extra super absorbent pads so you don’t ruin your favorite pair of underwear. The clinic will give you some too, but it’s good to have your favorite kinds on hand.
- **Heating Pads:** Whether it be an electric heating pad, patches, or tiger balm – heat increases circulation and, as a result, helps to relax cramped or tight muscles.
- **Snacks:** Healthy snacks are helpful for managing hunger, especially if you have dietary restrictions or need to fast before a procedure. However, you may not be able to eat after a certain time so be sure to follow the specific instructions provided by the clinic.
- **Comfort Your Senses:** Bring things that feel good to you, like tea bags, ginger chews, face masks, lavender spray or even a fidget toy can help soothe your senses and provide a sense of calm during moments of anxiety or stress.
- **Your Personal Meds:** Pack the meds you take regularly and take them as you usually would. Most meds are fine to take during an abortion, and if you have any questions, just ask at the clinic or the medically-knowledgeable person supporting you through your abortion.

Double Check Your Wallet

- **Identification:** Bring necessary identification documents, such as a passport, driver’s license, or state ID, for traveling purposes and potential clinic check-in requirements.

Read more at [WeTestify.org/whats-in-your-bag](https://www.wetestify.org/whats-in-your-bag)

These Puzzles Fund Abortions Too

How much do you REALLY know about the state of US abortion access?

Kate Hawkins

Safe, Legal, and Now By Mail

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13					12				15		16		
17				18							19		
			20							21			
22	23	24					25					26	
27					28	29	30		31		32		
33				34				35		36			
		37							38				
		39				40						41	42
43	44				45		46				47		
48				49		50			51				
52			53				54	55	56				
57					58							59	60
62					63						64		
65						66					67		

For answers: www.wetestify.org/the-abortion-times

ACROSS

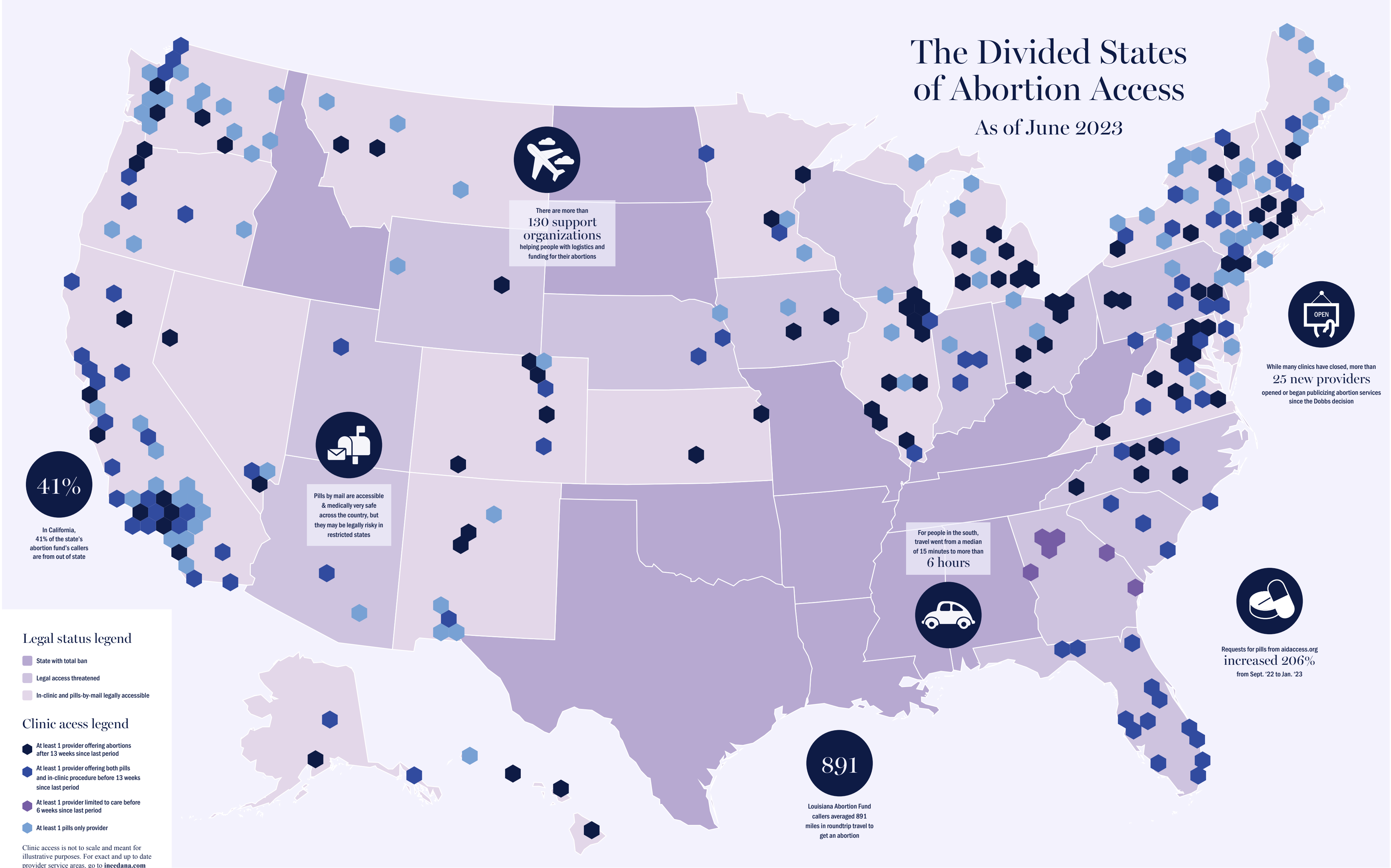
- Only U.S. state with a non-rectangular flag
- THIS CLUE IS IN ALL ____
- " ____: Pig in the City"
- Plant with staghorn and sword varieties
- Musical cadences?
- Soccer star Morgan
- Lost it
- Device that once came in "Fruit Colors"
- See 52-Across
- Braid, to a Brit
- "I am unimpressed"
- Scoreless score
- TikTok fodder, for short
- " ____ cerveza, por favor"
- Baby photographer Anne
- Kleenex: tissue :: ____: food processor
- Boxer's sound
- See 52-Across
- Forever and a day
- Home of the Amundsen-Scott Station
- Popular housewarming gifts
- Sardonic
- Chop ____
- Was "it" in a game of "Sardines"
- Beer with "West Coast" and "Hazy" varieties
- Transport boat

- Common name for the combination of 20-Across and 37-Across
- 34AA or 40J, e.g.
- They'll give you runs for your money?
- Biblical haven
- Structure at a farmers market
- Ace
- " ____ Lose Ur Head" ("SIX the Musical" song performed by Anne Boleyn)
- Bath butt
- Whirlpool

DOWN

- Amiss
- Pronoun sometimes paired with "she"
- Anger
- Laser-focused,say
- Symbol before a key signature
- Teacher's assistant
- Alka-Seltzer sound
- ____ und Drang
- Attractant
- Gluten-free baking staple
- ____ Baby (Patti the Platypus, for example)
- Performs well
- "Doctor De Soto" author and illustrator William
- Baby fox

- ____ dress (attire worn by Audrey Hepburn in Breakfast at Tiffany's)
- Pipe material, for short
- "Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle" actress Lucy
- Exceedingly common
- Game with "Wild Draw Four" cards
- Day dreams?
- What a fletcher fletches
- Rings up
- Pleasant response to "Gorgous weather, today!"
- Circuit for Althea Gibson
- Pig's digs
- One for a stereotypical pirate
- One for a stereotypical pirate
- Staggered
- Sex drive
- Expectorates
- Major artery
- Racial justice movement since 2013, for short
- Unit cost?
- Close to
- Chums
- In sleep mode, say
- Young man
- One of a billion in a tupperware drawer, perhaps
- Wily



My Abortion Story: Real Testimonials

“I share my story because I want people to know they’re not alone.”



Aryn
They/Them, Ohio

I share my story because I want other transgender and nonbinary people to know that they are valid in seeking abortion care and have a voice in the movement.

Abortion advice: My best advice is to reach out to your support system, even people who you may not think will be supportive may surprise you. Everyone loves someone who had an abortion and you are never alone in your decision.

How I honor my abortion: I honor my abortion by sharing my story with others to help end the stigma around abortion care.

What I wish people knew about abortion: I wish that more people knew that barriers to accessing abortion and that legality is not the same as equal access to services.

What is your favorite abortion in popular culture? My favorite abortion story in the media is Stevie Nicks’ story because of the description of the barriers that she faced when accessing care. This story shows that the fight for adequate reproductive healthcare has been going on for generations. Nicks even states that if she had not had her abortion, Fleetwood Mac would not exist today. She made the right decision for her and supports abortion access in media. I think that it is important to look to our elders in the movement for their guidance and support.



Esmarie
She/Her, Texas

I share my abortion story to let others know they are not alone.

Abortion advice: You never need to have a reason.

How I honor my abortion: I honor my abortions by accepting myself and not letting anyone try to change that.

What I wish people knew about abortion: I wish people knew that abortions are done safely and it’s not scary as people make it to be.

What is your favorite abortion in popular culture? It would have to be Nicki Minaj because a lot of females really do look up to her. I’m glad she opened up about it.



HK Gray
She/Her, Texas

I share my story because I want people to know about the laws and bans that affected my access to an abortion. Many people don’t have or know anyone who has gone through these barriers and talked about it, so the information is not getting out there. I think it’s powerful for people to know what it’s really like to have to jump through all these hoops in order to get an abortion.

Abortion advice: You are a whole human being, and even though it can be a big decision to have an abortion, it is still just one decision you’ve made. It doesn’t make you, it doesn’t define you. And even though most likely people will judge you for it, at the end of the day none of that matters when you know you made a decision to the best of your ability.

How I honor my abortion: I continue to testify and advocate for reproductive justice. Also, on my abortion anniversary, I donate to my local abortion fund and take myself on a self-care date.

What I wish people knew about abortion: I wish people knew that abortions are common. They always have been and they always will be. There is this level of secrecy in most communities because of the stigma associated with having an abortion, but people from all backgrounds have abortions. They may not say it out loud, but there are people in your community with their own abortion stories.

What is your favorite abortion in popular culture? The first person I had ever even heard about that had an abortion was Nicki Minaj. I was like 13 and it was a big scandal on TMZ at the time. Thinking back to it after I had my abortion I really liked how she never showed any shame about it even after the backlash.



Nikia Paulette
She/Her, Missouri

I share my story because I want the world to know abortion is healthcare. Everyone should have inclusive, equitable access to healthcare!

Abortion advice: Everything is going to be okay. You know in your heart what’s best for you.

How I honor my abortion: I honor my abortion by sharing my story & showing appreciation to other storytellers.

What I wish people knew about abortion: Abortion is healthcare.



Shivana Jorawar
She/They, New York

I share my story because I want people to know they are not alone.

Abortion advice: Breathe. Release guilt. Breathe out. Release shame. Breathe in again. Know this is a decision you can be proud of.

How I honor my abortion: I share my story and remember my strength.

What I wish people knew about abortion: Most women who have abortions are mothers.

What is your favorite abortion in popular culture? Christina Yang’s in *Grey’s Anatomy*!



Ying
She/Her, Washington

I share my story because it’s important for me to de-stigmatize abortion in the medical community and among healthcare providers. Abortion is healthcare and we should feel supported and safe to talk about it just like any other topic in healthcare.

Abortion advice: Feel your inner strength and power in making healthcare decisions for yourself. Allow your heart to feel all of the emotions. Also know that you are not alone in your journey--others are here to share, to support, and to uplift you.

How I honor my abortion: I honor it by talking about it with others--loved ones and strangers. I do not regret but instead, reflect. I honor it by remembering my decision and journey when I care for others going through their own journey and decision to have an abortion.

What I wish people knew about abortion: I wish people could see the lives and the hearts of those who have abortions. Knowing abortion is common, everyone loves someone who’s had an abortion. Also, abortion should be free of judgment and criminalization. It is legal, it is safe, and it is healthcare.

What is your favorite abortion in popular culture? I liked the depiction of the decision to have an abortion in *Insecure* when Kelli talked about her former abortion. Introducing humor into the discussion about abortion in the media is human and normalizing. Many people decide to have an abortion, it’s done, and they move on; there is no need to dramatize it..

We ALL Deserve Access

Arwen Donahue for We Testify

TODAY, MORE than EVER BEFORE, WE HAVE a SAFE and DEPENDABLE WAY to HAVE ABORTIONS in OUR OWN HOMES.

SO WHY DON'T WE DO it THIS WAY MORE OFTEN?

PEOPLE have SELF-MANAGED their ABORTIONS for THOUSANDS of YEARS.

Cotton Root Bark • Queen Anne's Lace Seed • Pennyroyal

BUT the METHODS DIDN'T ALWAYS WORK.

Pomegranate • Parsley • Black Cohosh Root

AND they WEREN'T ALWAYS SAFE.

THEN, in the 1980s, BRAZILIAN WOMEN REALIZED they COULD USE CYTOTEK (MISOPROSTOL), an ULCER MEDICATION, to CAUSE ABORTIONS.

THAT SAME DECADE, FRENCH SCIENTISTS CREATED RU486, also known as MIFEPRISTONE. TOGETHER, these MAKE UP the ABORTION PILLS WE USE TODAY.

WE ALL DESERVE ACCESS!

MEDICATION ABORTION CAME to the US in 2000. BUT the FDA WON'T ALLOW it to BE DISPENSED at a PHARMACY or SHIPPED in the MAIL, EVEN though it's SAFER than TYLENOL.

* without a prescription

MIFEPRISTONE and MISOPROSTOL CAN BE USED TOGETHER DURING the FIRST 12 WEEKS of PREGNANCY.

MISOPROSTOL CAN ALSO BE USED ON its OWN.

THIS MATTERS because SELF-MANAGED MEDICATION ABORTION is LEGALLY RISKY.

IN the UNLIKELY EVENT that a PERSON NEEDS to GO to the HOSPITAL, they CAN SAY: I had a miscarriage.

THERE is NO WAY for a MEDICAL EXPERT to TELL the DIFFERENCE.

OVER POLICED COMMUNITIES are ESPECIALLY at RISK of FACING JAIL TIME.

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ARRESTED - or EVEN TAILED - for TAKING the PILLS on their OWN.

It's my body.

EVERYONE loves SOMEONE who HAD an ABORTION.

WE CAN CREATE a WORLD where OUR SELF-MANAGED ABORTIONS are SAFE and COMPASSIONATE.

LEARN MORE: AbortionOnOurOwnTerms.org WeTestify.org

IF YOU or SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS SUPPORT, CONTACT ReproLegalHelpline.org or 844-868-2812

I’m a Transmasculine Non-Binary Person and I’ve Had an Abortion

Sage Coffey for We Testify



‘It felt like coming up for air’

Abortion patients defend mifepristone access

Christine Fernando

Originally published by *USA Today* on May 27, 2023

When Layidua Salazar went to the doctor in 2013, she expected it to just be a regular annual exam.

But when the nurse came in, she said Salazar wouldn’t be having a pap smear. She was pregnant.

Salazar was on birth control and felt sure the nurse had the wrong room. But they had run the test three times. “We are sure you’re pregnant,” the nurse told her.

There was another complication. Just days before, Salazar, who came to the U.S. from Mexico City without documentation when she was 5 years old, had received a deportation letter saying she had only eight months left in the country.

“I felt like the air was sucked out of me,” said Salazar, then 27 years old. “I felt like I was sinking.”

It was clear to Salazar she did not want to be pregnant in the midst of a deportation case.

“That deportation letter became completely real in that moment,” she said. “And I knew I did not want to have a child in that degree of uncertainty.”

She decided her best option: medication abortion.

As government approval of the major abortion pill mifepristone faces legal threats, abortion rights advocates fear access to medication abortion may be restricted nationwide. In the latest step in the case, a panel of three federal court judges heard arguments this month in a lawsuit aiming to withdraw the drug’s approval. After the panel makes its decision, the ruling will likely be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Amid the legal saga, people who’ve had medication abortions told USA TODAY the ability to choose mifepristone felt life-saving and gave them a sense of flexibility and control over their abortion experiences.

“It felt like coming up for air,” said Salazar, now 36 and living in Oakland, California after her DACA application was approved in 2015 and her deportation case was administratively closed. “When I found out I was pregnant, I felt like I was drowning. When I confirmed my appointments and got my medication, I felt like I could breathe again.”

Is mifepristone safe?

The Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine, a coalition of anti-abortion groups, is suing the FDA to reverse approval of mifepristone, claiming the drug comes with medical risks that have landed women in emergency rooms

and that its approval process was rushed. As a result, the plaintiffs say the drug should be pulled from the market.

But health experts and leading medical associations, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the American Medical Association and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, call mifepristone safe and effective for abortion and miscarriage care, pointing to the drug’s decadeslong safety record and studies showing it to be safer than common drugs such as Tylenol and Viagra.

Studies show major adverse reactions to the drug are “exceedingly rare,” occurring in about 0.3% of cases, according to the AMA. The FDA approved the drug in 2000 after three phases of clinical trials that began in 1983, a longer process than the agency’s average review time of about six months for similar drugs.

“This medication has been used safely and effectively in the United States by over 5 million pregnant people for the past 23 years and today accounts for more than half of all abortions in the United States,” said Ushma Upadhyay, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of California, San Francisco, who studies contraception and abortion care. “Study after study demonstrates the strong safety rating of over 99%.”

Medication abortion care in the U.S. typically involves a two-step regimen made up of the abortion drugs mifepristone and misoprostol. Amid uncertainty over the future of mifepristone access, many abortion providers are rushing to shift to misoprostol-only regimens, which have been used globally for years as a safe alternative when mifepristone isn’t available. But studies show it is less effective than the two-step regimen.

Choosing medication abortion

Salazar said she chose a medication abortion because she was able to get an appointment more quickly; it was cheaper than an in-person, surgical abortion, and was more accessible to her because she didn’t have a car.

After taking the pills, Salazar rested in her own bed while binge watching “Scandal.” She said she felt at peace in the comfort of her home, knowing this was “the right choice for me.”

“When I needed an abortion, it was a very difficult period in my life,” she said. “The least complicated of everything that was happening was getting my abortion. It was routine. It was uneventful. It was boring. That’s how every abortion should be.”

“It feels devastating to know that people are having their options limited in this way,” she added.

Larada Lee-Wallace was a 19-year-old college sophomore when they had an abortion. Now state campaign manager for abortion access at the national nonprofit Advocates for Youth and based in the San Francisco Bay area, Lee-Wallace said accessing abortion care is “like the worst game of Tetris.”

“There are constant barriers – taking time off, scheduling appointments, traveling, costs, finding childcare,” she said. “Some people are facing intimate partner violence and may not be able to safely leave the house for a period of time to get a surgical abortion. It’s a really complicated process for so many people. So if there is an option available that will be easier or feel more comfortable to them in getting the care they need, that should be celebrated.”

For them, medication abortion felt like the safest option when they got an abortion during “the height of the COVID-19 pandemic” when most clinics had closed. It also allowed them to be surrounded by loved ones, including their sister.

“It was really beautiful, actually, to be in the comfort of my own home, to be with my sister and to have that love and support,” she said. “There are so many things outside of your control, so having some level of control over what I wanted to do, where I wanted to do it was huge.”

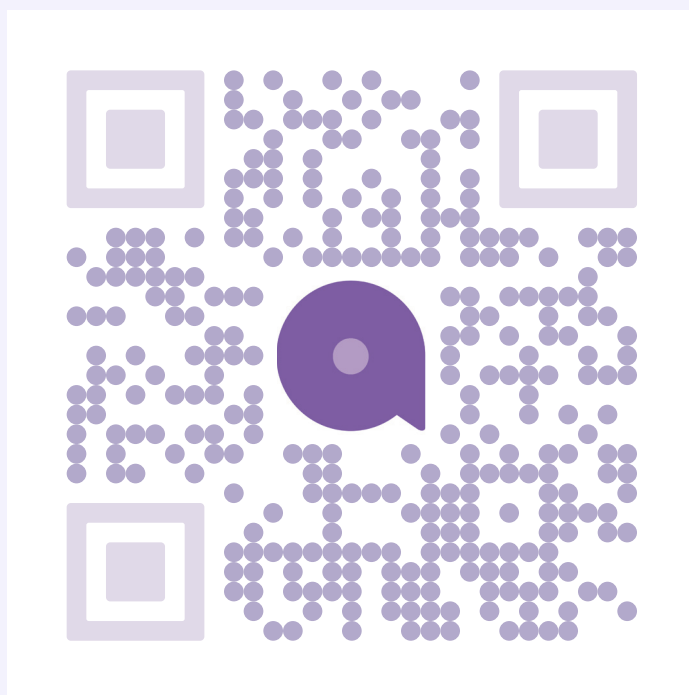
Jack Qu’emi, 32, also chose medication because it was cheaper and “felt more comfortable.” Qu’emi said access to medication abortion may be especially important to trans and nonbinary patients like them because of a deep history of medical trauma from health care settings where they may be misgendered, outed, disrespected or harassed.

“You may not feel safe in that space,” said Qu’emi, who is based in Los Angeles. “I don’t even want to go to the gynecologist because it feels invasive and because many of us have complicated relationships with our body. I thought self-managed options would be less invasive and feel more comfortable to me.”

As they wait to see what the future holds in terms of access to mifepristone, Qu’emi said they are scared and don’t know what they would have done if they didn’t have access to the drug a decade ago.

“I’m so grateful I had that choice and that option,” they said, “and I can’t imagine what other people are going through, having bits and pieces of their rights taken away from them one little chunk at a time.”

Need an abortion?



Learn about all of your options
@ ineedana.com

Made by people who've had abortions for people who will.