

The Honorable Henry McMaster  
State House  
1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

August 31, 2017

Dear Governor McMaster:

On behalf of the South Carolina Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), we write in strong opposition to Executive Order No. 2017-15.

ACOG South Carolina strongly opposes any effort to ban qualified medical care providers from receiving state, local, and federal funds. Executive Order No. 2017-15 directs our State's Department of Health and Human Services to seek federal approval to exclude currently qualified providers like Planned Parenthood from the Medicaid program—in violation of longstanding federal patient protections. Although it is unclear that this will be permitted by the federal regulators, if successful, this change could dramatically reduce patient access to some of our state's most qualified health specialists; other providers cannot fill the gap. For example, each year Planned Parenthood provides close to 4,000 men and women in South Carolina with breast and cervical cancer screenings, pregnancy testing, family planning services and other preventive care including vaccinations. South Carolina is already underserved with Women's Health providers and this order exacerbates the problem.

We are also deeply concerned that Executive Order No. 2017-15 directs the Executive Budget Office to create and maintain a public list of physicians and medical practices that are "affiliated with an abortion clinic and operating concurrently with and in the same physical, geographic location or footprint as an abortion clinic." Such a public registry would be an invitation for intimidation, threats, and even violence against women's health care providers and their patients. Since the summer of 2015, there has been an alarming uptick in online hate speech, direct threats of violence, and violent instances aimed at physicians and our patients. A public registry and the annual "audit or survey" that this Executive Order demands puts the safety and security of physicians and patients at risk.

Every day, Ob-gyn physicians see the harmful impact that unequal access to health care has on families and communities in our state. This Executive Order not only limits access to critical primary health care services, but also puts women's health care providers in harm's way. We urge you to reconsider this very harmful Executive Order.

Signed,

Scott Sullivan MD  
South Carolina ACOG Chair

Judy Burgis MD  
South Carolina ACOG Vice-Chair

Amy Crockett MD  
South Carolina ACOG Legislative Chair