

AAVMC Statement on U.S. Supreme Court Decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*

The recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* will have a significant impact on the academic veterinary medical community. We recognize that strong feelings for and against abortion rights existed both before and after the procedure was legalized, and they will remain regardless of what happens next.

One of the basic foundations of a strong academic learning community is to support the health and wellbeing of its members by providing access to healthcare resources. Given the demographics of the veterinary profession and the veterinary student population, it is reasonable to assume that this change in access to care will impact students and faculty at AAVMC member institutions, and although this decision may disproportionately affect women, it impacts all genders, families, and communities.

While states may have differing responses to this decision and future legislation, we anticipate that there will be an observable effect in recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff. This will exacerbate difficulties in specialist training and may disrupt leadership development at our member institutions.

AAVMC encourages its member institutions to provide support to all students, faculty, and staff as they make a wide spectrum of decisions related to personal and family healthcare and wellbeing. Responding to and supporting those who are impacted is a critical element of fostering an authentically inclusive environment.

This has been and continues to be a challenging time for our member institutions and our profession. AAVMC will continue to pursue our vision of being a trusted leader and valued partner in advancing health and embody our core values of affirming the dignity and equity of all people.

Examples of activities that institutions might consider:

- Engage all stakeholders in your community in civil discourse around the impact of this decision by organizing activities such as listening sessions or town hall events.
- Affirm institutional support for diversity, equity, and inclusion broadly, with emphasis on women's rights specifically, and actively promote a culture of mutual respect and support.
- Review student and employee policies pertaining to mandatory attendance, excused absences and parental leave for all family planning paths and ensure that the policies are well-communicated and highly visible.
- Work with wellbeing professionals and legal counsel to help students, faculty and staff navigate the changing health and legal landscape.

- Offer training to faculty around appropriate responses and available resources related to mentoring students who may be experiencing added challenges as a result of this change in access to care.
- Clarify any advocacy work being done by your institution at the University level as well as any relevant policies around advocacy by individuals.