

ABORTION IN THE U.S.

Abortion data in the U.S. is only available from two sources, privately from The Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) and federally from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Since Alaska, California and New Hampshire do not provide abortion data to the federal government, and since California accounts for more abortions than any other state in the U.S, the CDC numbers are not complete. AGI, on the other hand, is the research arm of Planned Parenthood, the world's largest abortion provider. While their data is helpful, they certainly have a position and agenda in regard to abortion. The following information has been gleaned from both sources and should give you a better idea of the frequency and distribution of abortion in the U.S.

ANNUAL ABORTION RATES

- In 2000, 1.31 million abortions took place, down from an estimated 1.36 million in 1996. From 1973 through 2000, more than 39 million legal abortions occurred (AGI).
- In 2001, the highest number of reported legal induced abortions occurred in NYC (91,792), Florida (85,589), and Texas (77,409); the fewest occurred in Idaho (738), South Dakota (895), and North Dakota (1,216) (CDC).
- There are 36 abortion per 1,000 live births in Idaho and 767 abortions for every 1,000 live births in NYC (CDC).
- Overall, the annual number of legal induced abortions in the United States increased gradually from 1973 until it peaked in 1990, and it generally declined thereafter (CDC).
- In 1998, the last year for which estimates were made, more than 23% of legal induced abortions were performed in California (CDC).
- The abortion rate in the United States was higher than recent rates reported for Canada and Western European countries and lower than rates reported for China, Cuba, the majority of Eastern European countries, and certain Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union (CDC).
- The national legal induced abortion ratio increased from 196 abortions per 1,000 live births in 1973 to 358 abortions per 1,000 in 1979 and remained nearly stable through 1981. The ratio peaked at 364 abortions per 1,000 live births in 1984 and since then has demonstrated a generally steady decline. In 2001, the abortion ratio was 246 abortions per 1,000 live births (for the states that reported, a 0.4% increase from 2000) (CDC).
- 49% of pregnancies among American women are unintended; 1/2 of these are terminated by abortion (AGI).

WHO HAS ABORTIONS?

- 82% of all abortions are performed on unmarried women (CDC).
- The abortion ratio for unmarried women is 572 abortions for every 1,000 live births. For married women it is 65 abortions for every 1,000 live births (CDC).

- Women between the ages of 20-24 obtained 33% of all abortions (CDC).
- 52% of U.S. women obtaining abortions are younger than 25, and teenagers obtain 19% (AGI).
- Adolescents under 15 years obtained less than 1% of all abortions, but have the highest abortion ratio, 744 abortions for every 1,000 live births (CDC).
- 48% of women who have abortions had at least one previous abortion (AGI).
- Black women are more than 3 times as likely as white women to have an abortion, and Hispanic women are 2 1/2 times as likely (AGI).
- 43% of women obtaining abortions identify themselves as Protestant, and 27% identify themselves as Catholic (AGI).

WHY ARE ABORTIONS PERFORMED?

- On average, women give at least 3 reasons for choosing abortion: 3/4 say that having a baby would interfere with work, school or other responsibilities; about 2/3 say they cannot afford a child; and 1/2 say they do not want to be a single parent or are having problems with their husband or partner (AGI).

WHEN DO ABORTIONS OCCUR?

- 88% of all abortions happen during the first trimester, prior to the at 13th week (CDC).

HOW ARE ABORTIONS PERFORMED?

- 95% of abortions were known to have been performed by curettage (which includes dilatation and evacuation [D&E]). Most curetage abortions are suction procedures(CDC).
- Hysterectomy and hysterotomy were used in less than 1% of all abortions (CDC).
- Medical abortions make up approximately 3% of all abortions reported (CDC).

WHO IS PERFORMING ABORTIONS?

- The number of abortion providers declined by 11% between 1996 and 2000 (from 2,042 to 1,819) (AGI).
- 97% of abortion facilities provide abortion at 8 weeks, and 86% provide services at 12 weeks, but provision drops off steeply after that, with only 13% of providers offering services at 24 weeks (AGI).

ABORTION FATALITY

- In 2000 (the most recent year for which data are available), 11 women died as a result of complications from known legal induced abortion (CDC).
- The number of deaths attributable to legal induced abortion was highest before the 1980s (CDC).
- In 1972 (the year before abortion was federally legalized), a total of 24 women died from causes known to be associated with legal abortions, and 39 died as a result of known illegal abortions (CDC).

THE COST OF ABORTION

- In 2000, the cost of a nonhospital abortion with local anesthesia at 10 weeks of gestation ranged from \$150 to \$4,000, and the average amount paid was \$372.20 (AGI).
- In nonhospital facilities offering mifepristone for use in medical abortion in 2000, the average cost of a medical abortion was \$490.23 (AGI).

MEDICAL ABORTION

- About 37,000 medical abortions were performed in the first half of 2001; these procedures involved the use of mifepristone or methotrexate (AGI).
- Approximately 600 providers offered medical abortion in the first half of 2001 (AGI).

ABORTION AND CONTRACEPTION

- Induced abortions usually result from unintended pregnancies, which often occur despite the use of contraception (CDC).
- 54% of women having abortions used a contraceptive method during the month they became pregnant. 76% of pill users and 49% of condom users reported using the methods inconsistently, while 13% of pill users and 14% of condom users reported correct use (AGI).
- 8% of women having abortions have never used a method of birth control; nonuse is greatest among those who are young, poor, black, Hispanic or poorly educated (AGI).
- 9 in 10 women at risk of unintended pregnancy are using a contraceptive method (AGI).

ABORTION AND MINORS

- 55% of minors who have abortions do not tell their parents (AGI).
- 32 states currently enforce parental consent or notification laws for minors seeking an abortion: AL, AR, AZ, DE, GA, IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, MN, MO, MS, NC, ND, NE, OH, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WI, WV, and WY. The Supreme Court ruled that minors must have the alternative of seeking a court order authorizing the procedure (AGI).

ABORTION AND PUBLIC FUNDS

- The U.S. Congress has barred the use of federal Medicaid funds to pay for abortions, except when the woman's life would be endangered by a full-term pregnancy or in cases of rape or incest (AGI).
- 17 states (AK, AZ, CA, CT, HI, IL, MA, MD, MN, MT, NJ, NM, NY, OR, VT, WA and WV) do use public funds to pay for abortions for some poor women. About 14% of all abortions in the United States are paid for with public funds (virtually all from the state) (AGI).