

Position Statement: Women’s Health Committee

A woman’s intrinsic rights are tied to her ability to control her own body, thus her future. Her First Amendment rights are violated whenever one group’s dogma is proposed as everyone’s law. SDDIA-RC, believing that reproductive freedom is essential to a woman’s integrity, supports local affordable services with access to education, contraception, safe abortion, and pre and postnatal care for pregnancy carried to term for every woman. The best way to reduce the number of abortions, reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, keep women safe from violence, and improve maternal and child health outcomes is to support the following:

- Mandatory comprehensive sexual health education that is age- appropriate and medically accurate. Prevention begins with education.
- Repeal of the Hyde Amendment, which greatly restricts access to the full range of reproductive care for every woman receiving services from publicly funded agencies such as Indian Health Services, Military Treatment Facilities and SCHIPs.
- Compassionate and comprehensive emergency care for sexual assault victims including mandatory information about emergency contraception in all emergency rooms and unrestricted access to such contraception. Increased funding for woman’s shelters, victim’s assistance programs and legal aide services.
- Health insurance prescription coverage that is fair and equitable between the genders and a mandate that all insurance issuers provide coverage for outpatient contraceptive drugs or devices approved by the FDA without exclusion or restriction.
- Reproductive Justice in South Dakota, including improved record keeping by the South Dakota Department of Health documenting inequities among ethnic and economic groups regarding rates of infant mortality, unintended pregnancy and inadequate prenatal care. An increase in funding for family planning services. Funding for contraception saves public dollars by preventing unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.
- A climate in which private, individual reproductive health decisions are reserved for each woman, with the counsel of family, medical professionals and/or spiritual advisors. **Any attempt to infringe on a woman’s decision making autonomy is viewed as sexual discrimination under her Fourteenth Amendment rights to equal protection.**

SDDIA –RC does not support any legislation that would advance fetal rights over the rights of the woman.

SDDIA-RC does NOT support legislation that would subject a pregnant woman to incarceration, unnecessary surgery (to herself or her fetus) or being deprived of her right to informed consent, bodily integrity, and in some cases life itself.

SDDIA-RC does NOT support the rights of pharmacists to refuse to dispense legally prescribed medication for any reason. (Known as “refusal clauses” or “conscience clauses”).

SDDIA-RC does NOT support the expenditure of state monies in matching grants for programs that teach “Abstinence Only” sexual health education.