



New Member Spotlight: Jamie Abrams Shares Personal Story to Spotlight Healthcare in a Post-Roe World

September 1, 2022

- [Reproductive Health](#)
- [Inequality](#)

Share

- [pdf](#)
- [twitter](#)
- [facebook](#)



[Elijah Hibberts](#)

Communications Intern

[email](#)

“In the aftermath of Roe’s being overturned, supporters of the move want to pretend that abortion access can be surgically extracted from women’s health care decision-making as a whole. Nothing could be further from the

truth.” - Jamie Abrams, American University

For this new member spotlight, SSN is excited to highlight [Professor Jamie Abrams](#) and her work on reproductive and birthing decision-making. As her SSN membership contribution, Abrams authored an [OpEd for NBC](#) connecting her personal experience of being diagnosed with breast cancer to the recent overturn of *Roe v. Wade*.

On the day the Supreme Court opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* leaked, Abrams learned she would be both fighting for reproductive rights and battling breast cancer. “The timing of the Dobbs leaked opinion being published on the same day as my personal breast cancer diagnosis was simply searing,” she told SSN. In her OpEd, Abrams makes clear the connection between abortion access and other health care decisions:

“When I was diagnosed with cancer, the last things on my mind were pregnancy, birth control and abortion. Yet nearly all my medical appointments, tests and surgery itself were predicated on controlling reproduction and being able to terminate a pregnancy if needed.”

Abrams goes on to explain how the state in which you live has important implications for the medical decisions cancer patients will now be able to make, something she is well aware of given her recent move from Kentucky to Virginia. She writes, “For a cancer patient facing a pregnancy or a pregnant person facing cancer in a restrictive state, the frightfully murky questions become how much cancer spread would be enough to justify a timely termination and what compilation of decision-makers holds this power?” Abrams closes the piece by arguing that society must support women’s medical decision-making autonomy in full, including the ability to seek abortion care.

The OpEd and research behind it were inspired by Abrams’ lived experiences, including both her own diagnosis as well as the loss of a colleague who died in childbirth. She told SSN:

“My scholarship has since continued to explore how the law treats birthing decision-making relative to other aspects of medical decision-making and relative to other aspects of reproductive and family decision-making. The OpEd likewise sought to draw on this same tension -- If we imagine

treating breast cancer patients the way we treat abortion patients in restrictive states now, it would be unimaginably cruel, insurmountable, and inaccessible.”

Following the publication of her piece, Abrams has heard from colleagues, friends, and strangers about the many ways the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* has affected their healthcare. The OpEd has also led to several public engagement opportunities, including an on-air [interview](#) about the story. She told SSN that:

“The OpEd helped me find my own voice more as a scholar. Finding our scholarly voices is a career-long journey amidst changing political, social, and pragmatic circumstances. As I continue cancer treatments, finding a way to incorporate my personal life into my scholarly inquiries builds ongoing authenticity to my voice and meaning to my work.”

Building on the arguments in the OpEd about how the same medical complexity would be treated differently across neighboring state lines, Abrams is now working on a project relating to geographic differences in law reforms for reproductive justice, reproductive health, and reproductive rights. With these issues now in states’ hands following the Supreme Court’s decision, she argues that these geographical differences in law making and advocacy must be studied in abortion politics and then incorporated into law reform movements.

Jamie Abrams

[Email](#) [Twitter](#)

American University

Jamie Abrams is a Professor of Law at American University. Her research focuses on birthing autonomy, reproductive rights, reproductive health; gendered violence, tort law, masculinities theory, feminist theory, legal writing, and legal education pedagogy. Abrams has published numerous law review articles and book chapters about these topics. She has appeared in media outlets such as the N.Y. Times, Washington Post, and NBC's Today Show.