

ABORTION AND FAMILY PLANNING ELECTIVE: LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals: To develop the knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes required for successful evaluation and management of patients desiring family planning care, including but not limited to contraception counseling, emergency contraception, medical abortion, and surgical abortion. To perform this work in a non-gendered, non-judgemental and open way (addressing each patient's cultural considerations), while considering the larger framework of reproductive and social justice, and the impact of systemic racism on our patients and their care outcomes.

Objectives:

Patient Care

- I. Assess and manage family planning patients in a clinical setting
 1. Perform a complete sexual and reproductive history and relevant physical examination
 - a. Assess pregnancy intention (IE: one key question)
 2. Present relevant information, and order appropriate diagnostic testing (may include, but not limited to, urine pregnancy test or serum beta hCG, blood type, routine gynecological/reproductive cancer screening, STI screening, intimate partner violence screening)
 3. Provide relevant counseling and recommendations regarding pre-conception, contraception and/or emergency contraception. (May include, but not limited to, same-day LARC, Plan B, STI treatment {including expedited partner treatment}, PrEP and safer sex counseling)
 4. Provide relevant counseling and recommendations regarding abortion options (May include, but not limited to, self-managed, medical, surgical) within the legal framework of the location you are learning in
 5. Develop appropriate management plans based on individual patients' needs, estimated gestational age, and clinical picture
- II. Assist and/or perform abortion procedures under the supervision of an attending physician or other healthcare provider

III. Perform common sexual/reproductive health care procedures under the supervision of an attending physician or other healthcare provider (including but not limited to: ultrasound, pelvic exams, abortion procedures, etc.)

1. Counsel patients on the indications, risks, benefits and alternatives of procedures
2. Obtain informed consent for procedures
3. Review post-procedure instructions and medications with patients
4. Interpret results from procedures performed
5. Clearly document procedures performed

Medical Knowledge

I. Demonstrate a commitment to acquiring the knowledge needed for independent provision of family planning services, from contraceptive counseling to pregnancy termination/abortion

1. Demonstrate capability in noncoercive counseling about all methods of fertility control and contraception
2. Demonstrate knowledge appropriate to level of training regarding:
 - Contraceptive counseling
 - Pregnancy options counseling
 - Management of spontaneous abortion (colloquially known as "miscarriage")
 - Therapeutic abortion methods, both medical and surgical
 - Prevention, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections
 - Contraceptive options in women with co-existing medical conditions ("high risk contraception") including contraindications and limitations of various methods
 - Pain control options used pre-, intra- and post-procedure
 - Recovery room and post-procedure care, and post-procedure follow-up protocols
 - Benefits, potential risks and complications of medical and surgical abortion, and their management
3. Develop ability to discuss socio-political elements of family planning and abortion care, including:
 - The public health impact of unintended pregnancy in the U.S. versus abroad
 - The common health consequences of pregnancies including later in life, disparity in outcomes due to race, and maternal mortality in your state
 - Why people face unplanned pregnancies in the U.S. and abroad
 - Why people choose to terminate pregnancies in the U.S

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- Barriers to access of abortion care in light of local social, economic and racial inequity
- 4. Develop understanding of legal elements of family planning and abortion care, including, but not limited to:
 - Local and state laws limiting/restricting abortion education and training in **[your state]**
 - Federal laws regarding family planning funding and legality of abortion in the US
 - Implications of local and state laws regarding abortion and IVF, in light of current state of federal protections (or lack thereof)
 - Local and state laws regarding emergency contraception provision/access
 - Current state of sex education curriculum in this community (both local and state level), and options to share with patients/families
 - Local and state laws regarding sterilization paperwork timeline and availability recommendations (ie whether it can be obtained whenever desired, as opposed to based on certain age or number of children, etc)
 - State laws regarding “conscience clause/care refusal” in regards to contraception, IVF and abortion
 - Local organization support regarding provider autonomy in regards to contraception, IVF, and abortion

II. Acquire and demonstrate appropriate knowledge of standards of care in family planning

- Standard of care for self-managed medication abortion and follow up options
- Standard of care for clinic-managed abortion and follow up options
- Standard of care for provision of contraception including emergency contraception, LARC, and “natural family planning” options

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

I. Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills with patients, families, and medical staff in a sensitive manner

1. Communicate with patients in an open, receptive, and non-judgmental manner with particular attention to privacy concerns and health literacy
2. Present patients concisely and thoroughly, sharing relevant information in an organized fashion
3. Communicate and work collaboratively with staff, consultants, and other healthcare providers to create and sustain an environment fostering a team-based approach to patient care

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4. Write complete, accurate, well-organized notes that reflect a synthesis of relevant information
5. Facilitate communication and transitions between the inpatient and outpatient setting

Ethical Conduct / Professionalism *(feel free to edit title of this section, given weaponization of “professionalism” against trainees)*

- I. Carry out responsibilities reliably, timely, and confidentiality while showing respect for patients and other healthcare workers.
 1. Arrive punctually for clinic huddle and/or team sign out and other expected duties
 2. Maintain appropriate mode of dress and expected behavior during interactions with patients, staff and colleagues
 3. Identify limits of one’s own medical knowledge and appropriately seek assistance when needed
 4. Complete assigned duties (including accurate and timely completion of charting) in a timely manner
 5. Maintain patient confidentiality throughout. Do not share identifying information on social media

System-Based Practice

- I. Recognize the structure, mission, available resources, and funding sources of the clinical site and utilize them to provide optimal care for patients
 1. Recognize and identify the role and scope of practice of family medicine physicians in the provision of abortion care and family planning
 2. Identify strategies for avoiding burnout and balancing personal and professional issues while working in a high-stress clinical setting, especially in light of TRAP laws, the end of Roe v Wade protections, etc.
 3. Identify aspects of abortion and family planning practice that nurture career satisfaction
 4. Collaborate with ancillary members of the health care team and utilize community resources to benefit the patient
 5. Act as a patient advocate, helping navigate the health care system in resource limited settings
 6. Understand the financial implications that this field of health care has for patients given widespread insurance limitations for coverage. Learn about abortion funds through national and local organizations, their limits in what funding covers, and how local vs national groups impact patients in their scope of funding

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

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I. Continually assess knowledge and patient care practices and utilize information to guide self-directed learning.

1. Identify sources of information and guidelines pertaining to the care of patients in need of contraceptive management, family planning services, and abortion care
2. Identify and explore your own biases and preferences regarding contraception and abortion care
3. Identify areas for further learning and personal improvement.
4. Seek out and remain receptive to feedback from supervisors throughout rotation, then incorporate feedback into future clinical practice

Note

You may wonder why there are not specific milestones/procedural goals included in this document. This curriculum is being shared nationally, and opportunity to practice certain procedures will vary widely. **Consider this your starting template.** If your goal is to be involved in “five first trimester dating ultrasounds,” feel free to add it!

This outline is also focused primarily on abortion, because the other aspects of family planning are typically well-covered in Family Medicine training programs. Consider adding anything from the below list if your training in these areas has been sub-par:

- Management of SAB (spontaneous abortion AKA miscarriage) - expectant management, when to follow quant bHCG, options for medication or procedures to help patient
- Ectopic management - treatment options, emergency management
- Fertility preservation options (ie before starting gender affirming hormones, chemo, due to career delaying family, etc)
- LGBTQ+ patient care considerations as they pertain to routine health maintenance tasks (eg vaccinations, STI sceening, PrEP, etc.) and abortion care
- Lactation
- Surgical sterilization (vasectomy, tubal ligation), with understanding of how current policies/laws/restrictions have come from (or led to) forced sterilization of non-consenting individuals.

THANKS:

Thank you to my three volunteer editors. Your work greatly improved this document. I wanted to thank you by name, but given how widespread this document may be, I did not. Safety first. (For those reading, the editors included an attending, a resident and a medical student.) And special thanks to K - my mentor from residency who supported and encouraged my abortion education and supported my love for teaching.

MORE RESOURCES:

This list includes an abundance of resources in case your elective is limited due to local laws. A great deal of learning can be done online, and culminate in a presentation to your co-residents about abortion care in your state. Of course, if you have the option to learn medication and procedural abortion care, take advantage! Who knows how long the chance to learn these skills will remain available.

Abortion Resources for Patients -

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xhAv-6XWOBXqSn_7jMpbCXw1c0TPIk-YaJUONLpg00c/edit?usp=sharing

Resources for Students, Residents and Attendings/other Providers -

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1j5g4cmwLy-glPOuNqY2DC9KrOXtclgU1TibkdR9E_vw/edit?usp=sharing

Donate & Support Abortion Groups -

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZeL5k3zwrIWdh7_LMoua4TIYEGWr0luLmweJIEIZ5U/edit?usp=sharing