YEARS OF TRUST WOMEN
annual report 2018-2019
A MESSAGE FROM JULIE

Dear Friend,

It’s hard to believe that another year has come and gone. Since we last had a celebration, a lot has happened in the world, especially in American politics.

It is hard to believe, that in Trust Women’s 10th year, that abortion rights are under even greater attack — hanging in the balance, quite literally. Just this year, the United States Supreme Court decided to take up an abortion case out of Louisiana. In the year to come, I know that we will all be waiting, with bated breath, for the decision to be handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the meantime, states across the nation have been passing their own bills so as to codify reproductive rights into state statute. We have seen the other extreme as well, states that have rushed to pass bills that would severely limit a person’s ability to access abortion, or to outlaw it completely. Fortunately, the courts have blocked all of these measures so far.

Closer to home, in Kansas, we witnessed the State Supreme Court declare that bodily autonomy for all people is a part of the state constitution. This is helping us breathe a bit easier in Kansas, where we operate our flagship clinic, which was Dr. Tiller’s clinic, Women’s Health Care Services.

However, in Oklahoma, things are a bit more tense, as the dilation and evacuation procedure, which is used in second trimester cases, was enacted for a week, as attorneys
SO THAT ALL WOMEN CAN MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR HEALTH CARE.

scrambled to get an injunction in place due to a District Court judge’s reckless ruling. This case is now before the Oklahoma State Supreme Court. The next step forward with this case will unfold before the end of the year.

In both states, we are suing to open up telemedicine for medication abortion eligible patients, as well as allowing our Nurse Practitioner the ability to provide medication abortions. This would allow us to see patients more days a week, even when we do not have a doctor available.

Even though this past year has been challenging on many different levels, my pledge to you and the pledge from Trust Women is that we will continue to move the needle. We will continue to push for greater access in underserved areas, we will continue to litigate and we will continue to hold our elected officials accountable. We will continue to lean into abortion. As Dr. Tiller so wisely said, “Women need abortions, and I’m going to do them.”

Thanks for celebrating the 10th year of Trust Women with us. Thank you for all you do and for bringing quality care and quality of life to people.

Warmly,

Julie A. Burkhart
Founder and CEO

Photo by Kerri LaMarche
LEANING IN TO ABORTION

Trust Women was founded to provide access to reproductive health care, including abortions. We provide the care and compassion patients need to make their own medical decisions.

Since abortion became legal nationwide in 1973, millions of people have been able to access abortion care. Yet for many women in this country, the right protected by Roe v. Wade is only theoretical—without access, there is no right.

PATIENT VISITS

The stark reality of the matter is women are traveling for abortion care—sometimes hundreds of miles and across state lines as anti-choice restrictions close clinics. We are constantly watching the changing landscape of abortion access. At all three Trust Women clinics, we regularly see out-of-state patients. This past year, we saw a notable increase in patient phone calls asking whether abortion was still legal, whether they could still be seen. When new abortion restrictions make the news, when a bad court decision is announced, women call us.
EACH YEAR TRUST WOMEN CLINICS SERVE OVER 5,000 PATIENTS
VICTORY IN KANSAS

Just before a wave of states passed abortion bans, on Apr. 26, 2019, the Kansas Supreme Court issued a decision affirming a woman’s right to abortion. It was a landmark 6-to-1 decision (*Hodes v. Schmidt*).

The justices found that all Kansans have fundamental rights, “which includes the ability to control one’s own body, to assert bodily integrity, and to exercise self-determination. This right allows a woman to make her own decisions regarding her body, health, family formation, and family life – decisions that can include whether to continue a pregnancy.”

This decision cannot be overturned by the United States Supreme Court. It cannot be undone through legislation. The only recourse for anti-choice organizations is to amend the state’s constitution, which is a tall order. It would require two-thirds approval from the Kansas legislature, as well as voter approval at the ballot box. This decision also means that regardless of what may happen to *Roe v. Wade* and federal protections for abortion rights, abortion would remain legal in Kansas.

Trust Women supporters helped win this case. Without you, we never would have had this opportunity.

Photo by Dale Small
Back in 2015, anti-choice lawmakers in Kansas began to push a brand new type of abortion restriction—the dilation and evacuation ban or D&E ban. This restriction essentially bans abortion in the second trimester. It also would have criminalized physicians for using their best medical judgement and the safest medical technique.

Trust Women supporters were in the capital testifying and opposing this bill on day one. Unfortunately, it passed and was signed into law by the governor at the time, Sam Brownback, arguably, the most anti-choice governor in the U.S.

The law was quickly challenged by Kansas attorneys and the Center for Reproductive Rights on behalf of Dr. Hodes and Dr. Nauser, both abortion providers in Kansas City.

Trust Women was not a plaintiff in this suit; instead, we concentrated our work on educating our constituents. Punitive laws are not just fought in the courts; they are fought and won in the court of public opinion as well. Trust Women staff and volunteers have knocked on over 120,000 doors since 2015, speaking face-to-face on voters’ doorsteps. Without this groundswell of public support, this law may never have been challenged or overturned. Instead, women in Kansas now have a constitutional protection to bodily autonomy. There is no stronger protection.

“This right allows a woman to make her own decisions regarding her body, health, family formation, and family life – decisions that can include whether to continue a pregnancy.”

~Hodes & Nauser, MDs v. Schmidt
Kansas Supreme Court, April 26, 2019
As always, we have been leaning in to abortion in everything we say, print or tweet.

Trust Women has continued to communicate nationally, regionally and locally to underscore reproductive rights, health and justice issues. We know if we do not speak for ourselves and for our patients, no one will do that for us.

We also know there is a plethora of misinformation about abortion. The lies about abortion are being spread by anti-choice activists, by anti-choice lawmakers and even by big tech.

For example, Facebook ads and Google search results allow fake clinics aka “crisis pregnancy centers” to advertise that they offer abortion care. They lure unsuspecting patients in, then lie to them and shame them for wanting an abortion.

We use our expertise to inform people about abortion, but also to change the tone of the conversation. Abortion is not something we need to apologize for providing; it’s not something women need to be ashamed for having. It is a necessary and life-saving health care procedure. As Dr. Tiller used to say, abortion is about a woman’s hopes and dreams; abortion is a matter of survival for women.

“One in four women in the United States has an abortion by the age of 45, but abortion is not discussed as what it is: essential health care.”

~ Julie A. Burkhart, opinion contributor to the Hill

Abortion care is part of our American fabric
NEWSWORTHY

Highlights from 2019 media coverage:

- Once a center of anti-abortion extremism, Kansas’s protections are now stronger than ever; Washington Post
- Who was Dr. George Tiller? Legacy lives on through Trust Women Foundation; Newsweek
- Trust Women CEO Julie Burkhart on anti-choice legislation sweeping the nation; KALW
- Abortion clinics in the US: "Our doctors are ostracized"; Der Spiegel
- As Trump fans the flames of anti-abortion rhetoric, Kansas offers a cautionary tale; The Intercept
- Restrictive abortion laws have consequences that reach far beyond state lines; SELF Magazine
- Obstacles to opening new abortion clinics include anti-abortion harassment; VICE News
- Abortus in Oklahoma? Dan moet je als vrouw heel sterk in je schoenen staan; Trouw

SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK
10,503 page followers
500,000+ impressions yearly

TWITTER
14,247 followers
800,000 impressions yearly

YOUR VOICE

The vast majority of Americans agree that abortion needs to remain legal and available. You can spread the word by getting a letter to the editor published in your paper. Your voice needs to be heard now more than ever. We can help you choose a topic, and with drafting and placing your letter. Email us at communications@itrustwomen.org.
DEFENDING RIGHTS

Trust Women clinics, in addition to being valued health care providers, are engaged local neighbors, advocating for women’s health. We reach and connect local supporters to help us reframe the issue as a woman’s ability to live a healthy, self-determined life.

For the past ten years, state legislatures across the country have been flooded with wave after wave of anti-choice restrictions. Trust Women’s advocacy department lobbies during legislative session, mobilizing citizens to hold elected officials accountable, educating lawmakers on health care policy and testifying in state capitols—all to build deep community support for abortion services and the policy makers who stand up for them.

Activists and supporters of Trust Women push back and create momentous change—working in places that many have written off as “too far gone.”

Our unique strategy and history of working in politically challenging places means we often find ourselves on the front lines in our nation’s struggle over reproductive rights.

Losing the protections of Roe v. Wade, which was once unthinkable, is now an ever-looming threat. That’s why we are on the ground, building public support for abortion rights and mobilizing pro-choice voters to get to the polls.

As an engaged local neighbor, Trust Women reaches people at community events, conferences, classrooms, at their doorsteps and online.

Here are some highlights from this year:

- Medication abortion reversal bill defeated in Kansas; Gov. Kelly’s veto sustained
- Hosted an open house in Oklahoma for elected officials and supporters
- Hosted 200 people at the Orpheum, in Wichita, for a special screening of After Tiller
- Made 6,480 phone calls
- Sent 4,573 text messages
- Knocked on 10,175 doors
Across the country, in 2019, anti-choice lawmakers had a banner year, introducing almost 400 anti-choice measures. Abortion opponents are hoping that the anti-choice majority on the U.S. Supreme Court spells the end of Roe v. Wade.

State legislatures enacted 58 abortion restrictions, many banning most or all abortions. Many of these restrictions were concentrated in 12 states across the Midwest and South.

Abortion remains legal in all 50 states, but laws that are left unchallenged in court are allowed to go into effect.

While these cases work through our court system, millions of women are negatively impacted.

Trust Women clinics have seen first-hand what happens when access to abortion is cut off.

In 2016, we saw a flood of Texas patients when over half the clinics in the state were forced to close. The law was found to be unconstitutional; however, those clinics did not reopen.

In 2018, we saw patients from Arkansas, when medication abortion was illegal for a few weeks. A federal judge later blocked enforcement of that law.
In 2019, we’ve been watching cases in Missouri aimed at closing that state’s only clinic in St. Louis.

Also in 2019, a rogue decision by a state court judge prevented us from providing 2nd trimester care at Trust Women Oklahoma City for a week. This case is now before the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Trust Women is not just playing defense, though. One way we know we can increase abortion access is through the use of telemedicine for medication abortion. This is a two-medication regimen that has been proven to be safe and effective.

One of the obstacles we face is anti-choice laws that ban the use of telemedicine for abortion, preventing fully effective access.

Trust Women filed suit in 2018 to ask the state of Kansas to expand access to abortion via telemedicine. In 2019, we filed suit in Oklahoma to do the same.

For women in underserved areas, getting an abortion is increasingly difficult. Finding doctors willing to provide care is continually difficult. Telemedicine is an important part of the solution for increasing abortion access.
OUR FINANCIALS

Trust Women’s unique strategy and history of working in politically challenging places means we often find ourselves on the front lines in our nation’s struggle over reproductive rights.

Trust Women clinics collect patient fees and insurance payments; however, abortion care coverage varies widely state to state. Over one-third of our patients require funding assistance, totaling $370,000+ yearly. Our clinics are also subjected to routine legal harassment by anti-choice ideologues, driving up costs. As we face more regressive policies in our nation, your support is crucial now more than ever before.

Trust Women is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the IRS. Contributions to Trust Women are completely tax-deductible.
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