

Recap of "After the Gavel"
A Report on Women's Reproductive Health Options in North Carolina
Public event held on November 3rd by LWV of Dare County

Well over 40 people gathered at Jennette's Pier on Nov. 3rd to hear an expert panel speak about the state of reproductive healthcare in NC since the Dobbs decision. The panel of four included a government medical expert, an OB/GYN doctor from the Outer Banks, a representative of Planned Parenthood NC, and a lawyer from the ACLU. Other speakers were invited but declined the invitation. All the facts were presented. Here is a short list:

- As of today, abortion is legal in NC up to 20 weeks of pregnancy. The election could determine if this remains true. Some running for office would favor a 6-week ban or no legal abortion.
- Abortion is illegal in many neighboring states, so women are traveling to NC to obtain abortions.
- 25% of women will have an abortion in their lifetime. Reasons for abortions include fetal abnormalities and miscarriages.
- At 20 weeks, organs are developing in the fetus, and if there is a problem, that is when it will show up; however, if there is a problem, a woman cannot get an abortion after 20 weeks in NC, so some are forced to travel outside NC to receive help or medical care. Others are forced to bring the pregnancy to term.
- Late term abortion is extremely rare, only 1% of cases, usually due to devastating medical problem with the baby.
- Barriers in obtaining care, including medically unnecessary, state-mandated restrictions like - North Carolina's 72-hour forced waiting period.
- The closest Planned Parenthood clinic to the OBX is Virginia Beach, then Wilmington or Raleigh.
- Travel costs, time off from work, and other considerations impact our most vulnerable populations.
- The Dare Health Department services Medicaid patients and paying patients with insurance. They provide pregnancy prevention and counseling and birth control. Bills are rendered on a sliding scale according to ability to pay.
- Women's health doctors on the outer banks focus on prevention, counseling, and give comprehensive guidance and care with compassion and without judgment.
- The legal expert explained that doctors in NC are concerned about how to support people from out of state and providers who are overwhelmed, but are not being sued at this time.
- The doctor on the panel stated that some patients are looking into sterilization since they are afraid to risk pregnancy. When asked about resources, this website was given:
<https://www.carolinaabortionfund.org> helps women find locations to obtain abortions in NC.

Notes by: Rosemary Rawlins, Publicist, LWV of Dare