

### A Letter from SAFE's President

Dear Friends of SAFE,

As summer blossoms around us and the pandemic loosens its grip, I hope you're finding opportunities to reconnect with friends and family.

Throughout this incredibly challenging year, SAFE has been able to provide more support to Mainers than ever before. Because of your generous donations and the powerful partnerships between SAFE and Maine abortion providers, SAFE's average abortion grant increased from \$125 in 2019 to \$189 in 2020, and to **\$235 (to date) in 2021**. That's an overall increase of 88%! That means **332 Mainers were able to afford their abortions** due to \$62,586 in grants distributed in 2020. Thank you!

SAFE also recognizes that **the total cost of an abortion can go well beyond the procedure itself**; transportation, childcare, lost wages, and lodging add up fast. To help ease that burden, last year SAFE provided \$3000 worth of \$25 gas cards to patients in need. And starting this fall, **SAFE will launch a pilot program providing prepaid debit cards worth \$50 to every patient qualifying for a SAFE abortion grant**. This way, patients can cover their individual costs at their own discretion.

SAFE relies on two things for success—our wonderful donors like you who provide the financial support Mainers need, and our partner clinics to screen patients and distribute SAFE funds. Mabel Wadsworth Center, Maine Family Planning, and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England are champions for reproductive freedom here in Maine, and we at SAFE are so very grateful to work with them.

The past year's constant reminders of social and political unrest, and the fear and suffering around COVID-19 have been exhausting. Please take good care of yourself and those you love, as we work together towards reproductive freedom.

Yours sincerely,  
**Lynne Holler**, SAFE Board Chair

### SAFE Board Welcomes Two New Members

We are delighted to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors. As an all-volunteer organization with a working Board, joining SAFE requires a strong commitment to "rolling up one's sleeves." We thank these new members in advance.

**Jules Olbrantz** is a Fertility Awareness Educator and has worked for several youth-serving and immigrant justice non-profits. They have experience in design, social media, and fundraising, and are particularly passionate about ensuring youth and transgender folks have access to affirming healthcare.

**Sarah Vito White, D.O.**, is our newest clinician to join the Board. Dr. White is a family physician at Martin's Point Health Care Center in Brunswick who has a strong interest in reproductive healthcare. She graduated from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine and has practiced for 10 years. Her medical expertise is an invaluable asset to SAFE.

# The Best of Times and the Worst of Times

## Looking Back and Looking Ahead

### The Best of Times

Thanks to Governor Janet Mills and the Maine State Legislature, Maine is well-positioned to weather attacks on abortion. Forced pregnancy advocates tried and failed to get six anti-abortion bills passed in the 2021 Legislative Session. All six died in the Judiciary Committee. One bill would have required clinicians to misinform patients that medication abortions could possibly be reversed. This is blatantly not true. Other bills would have limited insurance reimbursement and imposed burdensome mandates such as a 48-hour waiting period, requirements for specific counseling, and a requirement to bury or cremate fetal remains for both abortion and miscarriage.

During COVID-19, medication abortion was made available through telehealth appointments without the need for an in-person clinical visit. Multiple studies have confirmed the safety and efficacy of this policy. Hopefully, it will be continued. Medication abortion is safer than over-the-counter ibuprofen, with serious complications requiring hospitalization occurring for less than 0.4% of patients (*Guttmacher Institute*). MaineCare continues to pay for abortions for eligible clients and SAFE continues to provide additional financial support as needed.

### The Worst of Times

Nationally, the picture isn't so rosy. Many states passed or tried to pass all kinds of laws making access to abortion difficult or impossible. In March, Arkansas's governor signed into law a near-total ban on abortion, even in cases of rape and incest. Missouri has only one abortion clinic left in the state. Other states passed "fetal heart beat laws" prohibiting termination after 6 weeks, before most people even know they're pregnant. Many such laws have been appealed, but with the Supreme Court (packed with conservative justices) set to revisit *Roe vs. Wade* in the next term, these are treacherous times.

Facts don't seem to count. While forced pregnancy advocates decry late terminations, the fact is that most pregnancy terminations occur in the early weeks. The Turnaway Study conducted at the University of California, San Francisco, shows that **people experience harm from being denied a wanted abortion** ([www.ansirh.org/research/turnaway-study](http://www.ansirh.org/research/turnaway-study)).

### SAFE Looks Ahead

Looking back at the best and worst of 2020 and early 2021, we are acutely aware of the work ahead of us. We will stay engaged with our clinical partners and community groups and work to expand reproductive rights in Maine. Our strong financial position enables us to continue supporting reproductive freedom and choice—and that is because of your strong and steadfast support. Thank you!

*SAFE appreciates donations online year-round—visit [www.safemaine.org](http://www.safemaine.org) and click "Donate today!"*

"As always, thank you for this funding. We know the difference it makes for people accessing abortion care. It is a burden lifted and, to be honest, there is too little of that happening these days. Our patients are grateful and so am I."

*Shannon Mackey, Maine Family Planning*



**SAFE Board of Directors:** Katherine Badger, Francia Davis, Lynne Holler (Chair), Joan Paul McDonald, Julia McDonald, Jules Olbrantz, Neil Shankman, Marshall Shepherd, Sue Stableford (Vice Chair), Marian Starkey (Treasurer), Sarah Vito White, Ann Woloson