GLOBAL DOCTORS FOR CHOICE: WORKING TO MAKE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE IN SOUTH AFRICA, GHANA AND GLOBALLY

PRESENTERS:
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AGENCY BACKGROUND: Founded in 2007, Global Doctors for Choice (GDC) is a network of physicians working for access to safe reproductive healthcare for women globally. GDC advocates for access to safe, legal abortion and other reproductive health services. GDC is committed to the provision of high quality medical care grounded in science and in the defense of human rights. The GDC/South Africa action center began in 2009 with an inaugural regional physician advocacy training for doctors from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, and held a second training for physician-nurse teams from 5 provinces, focused on medical abortion. The GDC/Ghana action center launched in 2011 with a physician-advocacy training event for physicians in northern Ghana.

http://globaldoctorsforchoice.org

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES: GDC/Ghana initially focused on access to family planning services and successfully advocated that family planning be covered by the national health insurance scheme. GDC/Ghana is conducting the assessment of the pilot implementation of this new policy in the Northern Regions. The GDC/Ghana plans to begin a country-wide investigation of the impact of conscientious objection to reproductive health care on women, other physicians, and the health system. GDC/South Africa has bolstered women’s reproductive and sexual rights in South Africa by extending the provision of medical abortion services within the public sector in five provinces of South Africa. To date, medical abortion has been introduced in all designated facilities in Khayelitsha, Western Cape and the Khayelitsha District Hospital will serve as a training site for abortion services for the province. GDC/South Africa is currently focused on implementing medical abortion services in Mpumalanga Province. Despite South Africa’s liberal abortion law, morbidity and mortality due to unsafe abortion is still high. GDC/South Africa is studying the motivations and consequences of conscience-based refusal of care, which is widespread throughout the country and constitutes a significant barrier to access to services.