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Statement Regarding Misinformation and Disinformation and Medical Professionalism

July 7, 2022

The American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ABOG) issued a statement regarding [Dissemination of COVID-19 Misinformation](#) on September 27, 2021. The following statement reiterates and expands ABOG's position.

Patients rely on physicians to practice medicine based on fact-based scientific data. ABOG standards and policies for certification and maintenance of certification have clear expectations about medical professionalism and professional standing that physicians agree to as part of the certification process. Intentionally providing misinformation and disinformation that may harm patients or public health does not meet these agreed-upon standards and may be grounds for adverse action on an OB GYN's certification status.

Free speech is a right in our country, and medical providers may practice according to their conscience and religious, moral, and ethical values. Diplomates are not required to provide services that conflict with these values. Facts, science, and evidence-based medicine are critically important guides to OB GYN clinical practice. The dissemination of misinformation and disinformation not only involves COVID-19, but is a threat to the access to and the ability to provide legal and safe evidence-based comprehensive reproductive health care, including contraception and abortion. Opinions publicized by OB GYNs about COVID-19, reproductive health care, and abortion should reflect the specialty's commitment to scientific and clinical excellence and to the needs of our patients.

Misinformation and disinformation about contraception and abortion can create false narratives about essential safe practices in the specialty. In addition, false or misleading information from board-certified medical professionals can also be used to advocate for legislation, regulations, criminal code, and health policy. ABOG considers the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation that may threaten the health of the patients who place their trust in its diplomates to be a violation of medical professionalism.

ABOG will review reports of dissemination of misinformation and disinformation about COVID-19, reproductive health care, contraception, abortion, and other OB GYN practices that may harm the patients we serve or public health. Eligibility to gain or maintain ABOG certification may be lost if ABOG determines that diplomates do not meet the standards that they have agreed to meet and that the public deserves and expects.

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