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As a family medicine provider in New Mexico, I see patients throughout the spectrum of their lives. From babies taking their first steps, to elders who rely on loved ones to get around, I am reminded of the diverse medical needs of my patients. I know that each patient exists within a unique set of circumstances that influence their health options and decisions and that over a single lifespan, these circumstances change. I am reminded also, that just because someone elects one option in the past does not preclude them from deciding differently in the future.

This is especially true of reproductive healthcare. As a family medicine provider, I routinely consult [with] patients on reproductive healthcare including contraception options, counseling, prenatal care, and abortion. As with other types of healthcare, reproductive medical needs change over a lifetime. For example, many women who make the decision to have an abortion are already mothers, and many women who have decided to have an abortion go on to become mothers. I believe New Mexican families should have access to reproductive healthcare, including abortion, and that this care should be both safe and legal. As we witness attempted abortion bans and restricted reproductive healthcare services across the nation, I am more confident than ever that right now is the time for New Mexico to protect our access to abortion care.

I'm concerned for what could happen to New Mexican families if Roe v. Wade were to be overturned or dismantled. Our reproductive healthcare needs should not be left to the discretion of the Supreme Court of the United States. I say this because they will be hearing the first case aimed at gutting Roe v. Wade in a few short weeks. We know better than anyone else what our New Mexican communities need. Our communities deserve access to safe and legal abortion care, and now is the time to take that stand.

Along with leading national medical associations and societies, I continue to support access to abortion care. Professional medical associations like the NM Academy of Family Physicians, NM Medical Society, NM Public Health Association, and hundreds of thousands of New Mexicans want abortion to remain safe, legal and accessible.

I am a lifelong New Mexican, and I have had the amazing opportunity to participate in clinical experiences in the communities of Estancia, Las Cruces, and Edgewood. Working in rural parts of the state, often in bilingual settings, shaped my path as a medical provider. I became a family medicine provider because serving these communities reinforces the values I was raised with: respect and support for others, even if we don't always agree.

Each one of us has our own set of values, and unique backgrounds that influence how we feel about abortion. The New Mexican value of respect for others however, is one that we share across the state. Now is the time for our New Mexican lawmakers and communities to come together with our shared value of respect in maintaining and supporting our freedom to make decisions about our own bodies. As a doctor, I can tell you that now is the time to protect the legal and safe reproductive healthcare infrastructure we have worked so hard to build.

Find out where your local elected officials stand on this issue. Elections are fast approaching, and your voice is critical to ensuring that the full spectrum of reproductive healthcare, including abortion, remains protected in New Mexico.

Dr. Susan Muraida, Albuquerque