

Ethics of Access to Reproductive Care



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Family building is a basic human right. Infertility can be seen as the inability to exercise

this right. The historical definition of infertility as a medical condition among heterosexual couples who fail to achieve pregnancy through sexual intercourse is exclusionary and does not meet the needs of same sex individuals, those who are single, and those who are transgender. The ethical principles that underlie discussions of access to care include procreative liberty and distributive justice.

Rights to access reproductive services can be divided into positive and negative rights and understanding the differences between these has a significant impact on policy decisions. The American Society for Reproductive Medicine has published an updated definition of infertility, which aims to address the need to expand access to care for all those who seek assistance with building a family. This updated definition goes beyond traditional definitions of infertility in an effort to be as inclusive as possible. It is hoped that efforts such as those of the ASRM, as well as the introduction of bills aimed at expanding coverage will lead to increased utilization of fertility services by all those who stand to benefit from them. Impediments to access to care are discussed, and general solutions offered.