

MEDICAL
STUDENTS
FOR CHOICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT



Medical Students for Choice members have been courageously responding to attacks on reproductive justice around the world. Through curriculum reform, legislative advocacy, student-driven workshops, and other grassroots organizing initiatives, our members leverage their voices and unique position as medical trainees to advance abortion access and education in their local contexts. Our staff at MSFC have been working diligently to ensure student advocates have the support and resources to overcome escalating obstacles to comprehensive reproductive health education.

I'm writing to you as a Texan medical student currently completing a Family Planning rotation out of state in a protective jurisdiction. Thanks to the MSFC Reproductive Health Externship, I was able to participate in abortion care and administer mifepristone for the first time in my medical training. The truth is, MSFC is the mainstay of preserving the abortion provider pipeline and workforce in settings where reproductive justice is not a reality for communities subject to restrictive legislation infringing on the human right to bodily autonomy.

Meanwhile, our organization is at an inflection point. Following extensive surveying of our membership, we heard loud and clear the need to align our work with the reproductive justice framework. This past year, as part of our strategic plan, we announced our new mission statement, "To support future abortion care providers and advocate for

reproductive justice globally." With this new mission, we have honed our focus on supporting the advocacy efforts of trainees who build upon the activism spearheaded by Black, Indigenous, people of color, and gender minority leaders of the reproductive justice movement.

As we look ahead, our Board committees are developing action plans for the execution of our organization's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan:

- The Finance Committee, chaired by Paula Valiño Ramos, is in the process of redefining an ethical and socially responsible investment strategy.
- The Nominations Committee, chaired by Dr. Ololade Sanusi, is recruiting Board members with advocacy experiences from around the world, bolstering Board governance informed by the perspectives of activists working in restrictive settings.
- The Fundraising Committee, chaired by Sarah McNeilly, is focused on identifying sustainable grant opportunities and building innovative grassroots fundraising campaigns to ensure MSFC can continue expanding abortion training opportunities internationally.
- The Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Supriya Kohli, is working closely with Board leaders and staff to oversee committee work and program alignment with our strategic plan.

Reflecting on the long history of reproductive oppression, MSFC is looking forward and inward, critically and thoughtfully. Beyond the floor of Roe and the nominal right to abortion, we are committed to action that yields true access by supporting comprehensive reproductive health training for future abortion providers and building communities of reproductive justice advocates globally.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danna Ghafir". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Danna Ghafir
President 2024-2025, Board of Directors
McGovern Medical School at UT Health Houston, Texas

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Soon after joining MSFC as Executive Director, I met with student leaders from Ireland to learn how that country weathered the lack of access to legal abortion for over thirty years. I wanted to understand what we should prepare for, and I left that meeting dreading what was to come yet certain MSFC would continue to connect future physicians with abortion and family planning education. Since 1993, in over 30 countries and despite thousands of legal restrictions and bans, Medical Students for Choice has supported future abortion providers, and we are more than ready for whatever the future holds. True to form, this year has seen MSFC student leaders join across borders, overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers, to build a global community that leaves no learner behind.

Let me be clear, the 2022 Dobbs decision triggered a national public health crisis that has done lasting damage to medical education and training, gutted the already fragile reproductive health care infrastructure, and now threatens the very profession of medicine by continuing to place the fickle interests of the state between patients and doctors. The very institutions we hoped would move swiftly to protect evidence-based medical education have been silent as abortion bans take root in multiple states, and far too many have caved under minimal

pressure to block access to abortion training and attempt to silence pro-abortion campus advocates. As a result, medical students face uncertainty and must navigate conflicting information from residency programs based in states with abortion bans. It comes as no surprise that many new graduates have decided to avoid residency programs in states that are currently suffering from or are vulnerable to political interference by anti-science politicians.

The geographic shift where medical students seek residency placement will have public health implications for years. The US already has the worst pregnancy outcomes among industrialized nations, and many abortion ban states that already suffer from high maternal mortality rates and increases in severe maternal morbidity now also face physician shortages further complicated by potential residents who prefer to avoid the threat of felony prosecution or state bounties.

Our work matters now more than ever. This year, we connected future physicians and residents with opportunities to train in abortion clinics. MSFC hosted Abortion Training Institutes that allowed medical students learning in abortion ban states to network with other students facing the same hurdles. We found inspiration and support from our global community, as student leaders shared knowledge and advice while participating in the global movement for reproductive health, rights, and justice. MSFC HQ continued to amplify the advocacy and voice of future abortion providers, working to ensure that medical education is a consideration as activists move to reestablish abortion access in the states.

I know that a healthier and more equitable world is possible and MSFC student leaders will play a huge role in building healthy communities free of reproductive oppression. Thank you for your continued support of this important work.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pamela Merritt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue background.

Pamela Merritt
Executive Director

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

PROGRAMS UPDATE

287 chapters in **29** countries held **1,964** educational events for their classmates and communities.



39 chapters engaged in curriculum reform efforts and **192** in advocacy work.



263 attendees joined us at our second fully virtual Conference on Family Planning.



55 students attended Abortion Training Institutes to safely learn about abortion.



87 medical students and residents received funding to get training in clinical settings through the Reproductive Health Externship.



MSFC provided chapters with supplies for **1,964** training workshops on vacuum aspiration abortion, IUD insertion, and No-Scalpel Vasectomy.



Conference on Family Planning

In 2023, MSFC continued hosting our Conference on Family Planning (CoFP) virtually on December 2nd-December 3rd. We engaged many experts and partner organizations to help provide a robust program with diverse training options. At the conference, 78 schools were represented globally, and 105 students completed Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA) and IUD placement training. Of the 67 faculty members who hosted workshops, 30 were MSFC alums.

The conference focused on a theme of “**Physician Harm Reduction as Essential Healthcare**,” and featured interactive and didactic sessions highlighting the role of physicians in reducing morbidity and mortality due to reproductive health inequities in marginalized communities through evidence-based practices and advocacy for harm reduction in public health policies. Attendees learned harm reduction techniques and practices specific to reproductive healthcare and had opportunities to engage legal experts with questions specific to physician harm reduction in practice.

The keynote speaker was MSFC alumnus Bhavik Kumar, MD, MPH, Medical Director, Primary and Trans Care at Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast and National Medical Spokesperson for Planned Parenthood Federation of America. The keynote address provided a brief overview of restrictive laws passed in Texas and used storytelling to share candid experiences of providing care under them, while always trying to do the next best thing.

I appreciated the mentors for the MVA training. My mentor took the time to teach me the anatomy first since I hadn't covered it yet in my curriculum. It was inspiring to see the many providers out there willing to provide and advocate for reproductive health care.

2023 Conference Attendee

Regional Meetings: East Africa Regional Meeting

The 2023 East Africa Regional Meeting hosted by Medical Students for Choice (MSFC), took place at the Grand Legacy Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda on Saturday, August 26th, with 25 members in attendance. The conference brought together medical students, healthcare professionals, and experts in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This report covers key aspects of the event, including the agenda, speakers, panel discussions, simulations, networking opportunities, attendee feedback, and notable achievements.



Abortion Training Institutes

In 2023, MSFC adopted a hybrid model for our Abortion Training Institutes (ATIs) for the first time. As a result of Dobbs, our US medical students trained in diverse political environments. While in previous years, virtual ATIs were ideal for cost-efficiency and accessibility; a return to in-person programming meant that MSFC medical students in abortion-hostile states would still be able to train safely without concerns if they were studying in a state where abortion was illegal or highly restricted.

Although medical students can legally train in abortion provision using models, concerns about safety for those in abortion-hostile states prompted us to offer an in-person option. As a result, we hosted two virtual ATIs and one in-person training institute near our headquarters. In total, 55 medical students participated in our ATI. Among the ATI attendees, 96% of medical

students rated the training as 'very useful' or 'useful,' consistent with previous years. The ATI remains a crucial tool to train medical students in abortion provision, and our first hybrid year demonstrated numerous benefits. As a result, we plan to continue offering hybrid ATIs in 2024.

Thank you so much for providing me this opportunity, being in a restrictive state at a right leaning medical school I often feel alone in my peers and advocacy feels like a losing battle. This conference reaffirmed my spirit and reminded me of the power inherent in my position as a medical student and the ability to effect change.

2023 ATI Attendee

Abortion Restrictions on the Rise

Approximately 40 people gathered at the Sunburst Statue on Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Milwaukee on Saturday, September 30, 2023, to advocate for equitable access to abortion. The event, hosted by Reproductive Justice Action Milwaukee (RJAM), aimed to sustain momentum for reproductive healthcare rights in Wisconsin and promote their petition to expand abortion services and access.

The rally featured community tabling, chants, and five speakers. A popular chant throughout the event was, "When reproductive rights are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!"



Activists announce a petition drive to extend abortion access in Wisconsin.



The speakers represented various groups dedicated to reproductive justice, including Affiliated Medical Services (AMS) Escorts, Medical College of Wisconsin-MSFC Chapter, Women's Medical Fund (WMF) Wisconsin, RJAM, and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO).

The petition calls for abortion access on demand, highlighting the obstacles posed by Statute 940.015, which bans abortion after viability (as determined by a physician), mandates in-person consultations, imposes a 24-hour waiting period, and bans telemedicine for abortion care. These restrictions make abortion services inaccessible for poor, rural, or working-class individuals across the state, forcing them to travel long distances, pay for accommodations, and take time off work—barriers that many cannot overcome.



The Medical College of Wisconsin MSFC Chapter at a rally to launch a petition demanding the expansion of abortion services statewide.

The Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) chapter of Medical Students for Choice (MSFC) emphasized the need to continue fighting for more accessible abortion services, including the repeal of Wisconsin Statute 940.04, eliminating mandatory waiting periods, and increasing access to rural communities and telemedicine.

Ensuring Abortion Education Has a Place in Curriculum

In 2023, MSFC chapters created robust programming to help medical students determine how to train safely and expand knowledge about abortion education and advocacy. Chapter events were especially crucial in abortion-hostile landscapes since they provided a genuine connection to medical students looking to obtain information about Family Planning Education.

In 2023, MSFC chapters hosted 1964 educational events, including hands-on training and workshops. These numbers aligned with the number of educational events hosted in 2022 and show continued investment. We did see a dip from 2022 to 86% of chapters transitioning leadership in 2023. In recent years, transitioning chapter leadership has become more difficult for chapters as inconsistencies in the abortion landscape can lead to challenges. Below are highlights from our chapter campus events and initiatives:

- **Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine** student leaders planned events related to disability justice. They worked closely with the Student National Medical Association and are interested in addressing the intersections between reproductive justice and other social justice issues. They also planned events to help patients choose the right birth control.
- **University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center** students hosted a Reproductive Health Symposium. This conference discussed inequities, bias, and strategies for patient advocacy within gender and reproductive healthcare.
- **David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA** is working on launching an abortion doula program on their campus consisting of abortion doula training, monthly shifts at the local family planning clinic, and quarterly debrief sessions over a year. Part of this project involves two independent research studies assessing the program's impact on med students and patients receiving doula support.
- **University of Louisville School of Medicine** put together a Values Clarification Workshop. These workshops are a critical tool in helping medical students work through the complex situations that can arise when providing abortions.



VOICES OF OUR STUDENT LEADERS

The University of California, San Diego School of Medicine San Diego, California

UC San Diego School of Medicine worked on a curriculum reform project, developing a speaker-based class where a different speaker presented on a topic related to reproductive justice every week. Potential lecture topics continue so we can work on providing relevant speakers.

University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Buffalo, New York

A student from the University of Buffalo-Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences conducted a research project on medical students' perspectives after the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Capturing these crucial perspectives ensures medical student voices and perspectives are prioritized in discussions about abortion access.

The University of North Carolina School of Medicine Chapel Hill, North Carolina

UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine hosted an abortion advocacy panel. This panel created a much-needed space for students to ask questions about legislation and to create a safe learning environment for those interested in abortion provision.

Medical School in Iowa Iowa

A student leader in Iowa was connected with MSFC to provide added perspective to an amicus brief. Having medical students step deep into the process of protecting abortion and illuminating a medical student perspective is vital to these ongoing discussions about the future of abortion.

Georgetown University School of Medicine Washington, D.C.

Georgetown University School of Medicine students are doing advocacy work to spread awareness about Crisis Pregnancy Centers. Educational content that dispels misinformation is vital in a post-Roe environment, especially as we build stronger coalitions moving forward.

FOUNDATION
SUPPORTERS
2023

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The 1661 Foundation

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The Isabel Allende Foundation

The Every Page Foundation

The Ford Foundation

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Thank you to every individual donor who has supported MSFC during this past year. We could not continue this work without your generosity and support.

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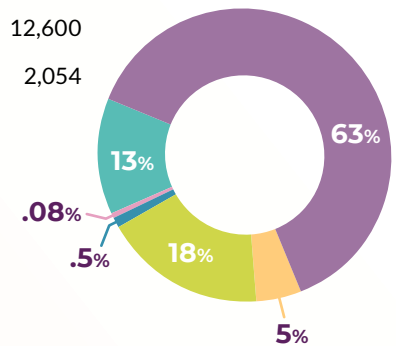
FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2023

INCOME

Individual and Trust Contributions	\$ 353,592
Foundation Grants	\$ 1,676,393
Investment Income	\$ 120,725
Net Gain/(Loss) on Investments	\$ 482,902
Meetings Registrations	\$ 12,600
Other Income	\$ 2,054

Total Income
\$ 2,648,266

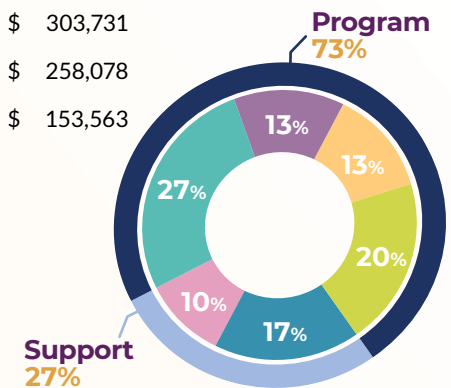
Total Net Assets
\$ 6,178,222



EXPENSES

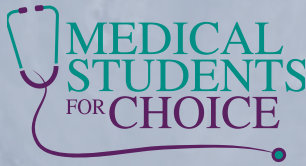
Student Organizing	\$ 420,035
Conferences and Meetings	\$ 209,349
Reproductive Health Externship	\$ 208,191
Outreach and Communication	\$ 303,731
Management and General	\$ 258,078
Fund Development	\$ 153,563

Total Expenses
\$ 1,552,947



THANK YOU!

We deeply appreciate our esteemed partners, advocates, and the remarkable medical students whose relentless commitment, activism, and enthusiasm drive our mission forward. Your ongoing support has been crucial in enhancing access to reproductive healthcare education and advocacy for reproductive freedom.



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