

Georgia abortion ban affecting women across a multistate region

June 17 2015, by Laura Kurtzman

A Georgia law banning later abortions is limiting access to the procedure for women throughout the South, Midwest and parts of the Northeast, even though it has only partially gone into effect, a study by UC San Francisco researchers has concluded.

Under partial implementation, the law effectively bans abortions once 24 weeks have passed since a woman's last [menstrual period](#). If it were fully implemented, it would stop abortions at 22 weeks.

Georgia is one of only two [states](#) in the Southeast, including Florida, where women can get outpatient abortion care after 20 weeks. Before Georgia's ban took effect in January 2013, it was the only state in the Southeast or the Midwest where a woman could get outpatient abortion care after 24 weeks.

The researchers looked at the abortions done at 20 weeks or more in four of the five abortion facilities in the state and found these procedures fell by 40 percent from 2012 to 2013, from 1,269 to 758. Overall, half the women who had procedures at 22 weeks or more were from out of state, while two-thirds of those at 24 weeks or more were from out of state.

These findings illustrate that when [abortion](#) care is already scarce in a region, banning it in one state has an impact on women's health and access well beyond that state.

"The result, even from the ban's partial enactment, is a lack of access to later abortions throughout the South and Midwest," said Sarah Roberts, DrPH, an assistant professor of obstetrics, gynecology and [reproductive sciences](#) at UCSF and lead author. The study was published June 11, 2015, in the *American Journal of Public Health*. "If the full ban goes into effect, the situation for the [women](#) who need these services will become even worse."

More information: "Implications of Georgia's 20-Week Abortion Ban." *American Journal of Public Health*. [DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302728](#)

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