

**Time:** 4:00 – 5:00 pm

**Location:** Webex

Voting Members Present: Drs. Anton Alerte, Linda Barry, Jenna Bartley, Michael Grey, Jaclyn Olsen-Jaeger, Adam Perrin, Cynthia Price, Andrea Shields, and Ms. Sara LeMaster

Voting Members Excused: Drs. David Gregorio, Linda Shapiro, and Kristyn Zajac

Voting Members Absent: Dr. Juan Salazar and Mr. Mario Garcia

Others in Attendance: Drs. Enrique Ballesteros and Zita Lazzarini

Dr. Linda Barry called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Dr. Linda Barry, seconded by Dr. Anton Alerte, to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2022, meeting as presented.

Favor to approve:	Drs. Anton Alerte, Linda Barry, Jenna Bartley, Michael Grey, Jaclyn Olsen-Jaeger, Adam Perrin, Andrea Shields, and Ms. Sara LeMaster
Against:	0
Motion Passed:	8

2. Update from Deans Council

Dr. Barry updated the Deans Council regarding discussions from Public Issues Council. In Deans Council, Dean Liang recommended to view a race-based admissions video provided by the AAMC which Dr. Barry will distribute to Public Issues committee. Further conversations continued for the need of faculty engagement including involvement of faculty governance.

3. Update from the Oversight Committee

Dr. Ballesteros updated the Oversight Committee regarding topics discussed in Public Issues Council but there are no updates from Oversight Committee.

4. Reproductive Justice & Women's Rights Issues

Invited speaker, Dr. Zita Lazzarini, Associate Professor and Director of Public Health Law and Bioethics updated the committee and discussed an update regarding new issues associated with the reversal of Dobbs decision and access to abortion across the country. Dr. Lazzarini explained that there is concern regarding a federal district judge in Texas who could reverse the approval of mifepristone which could impact the entire country. This would lead to a national ban to a medicine used in abortions and the management of miscarriages. There is increased apprehension from physicians and patients if mifepristone will be available, if pharmacies are willing to sell it, or if physicians are willing to prescribe. Our physicians are very concerned how this will affect the standard of care but cannot do anything until we know what the decision is. The issue was raised on how it would undermine the jurisdiction of the FDA in terms of approving mifepristone and the implication on other drugs. Discussions ensued concerning how this decision will impact patient care which include the delays in providing care, associated complications, and impact on

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physicians' decision-making related to treatment. Dr. Lazzarini further explained how Connecticut laws currently protect patients and physicians. They include a statute allowing abortion up to a certain point and a law which strengthens protections for abortion providers, patients obtaining abortions, and all information collected related to pregnancy and reproductive health for women. Further discussion ensued regarding the plan for students who require training in OBGYN and Family care specialties in other states who cannot receive their training in their state can come to our institution and others around the country to get the necessary training. In our institution there are many students and residents who are engaged and enthusiastic regarding advocating for reproductive justice, including for babies after they are born and their mothers. Further issues raised in the context of the conversation included racial disparities in maternal mortality being exacerbated, criminalization of providing health care which includes abortion care, undermining of the standard of care, many of these anti-abortion laws devalue the life of the mother. Question was asked in terms of the role of men as allies and potential father

## 5. Prioritize 2023 Issues

Discussions ensued how the committee would like to prioritize new topics for the upcoming meetings this year.

- a. Gender & Gender Identity Issues
- b. Parental Rights vs health of minors
- c. Politicization of Medicine and Science
- d. Health Disparities Issues related to COVID
- e. Medical Misinformation in general
- f. Persistent Health Disparities
- g. Race & Ethnicity, Racism/Bias in general
- h. Cannabis use

Adjournment:

Motion made by Dr. Linda Barry, seconded by Dr. Anton Alerte, the meeting was adjourned, and concluded at 5:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Sullivan*

## Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting

April 24, 2023

May 22, 2023

June 26, 2023

[Public Issue Council Operating Guidelines](#)