

# U.S. Supreme Court abortion decision complicates OB-GYN field, expert says

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The dean of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health says the U.S. Supreme Court's recent abortion decision is "threatening to undo all the progress that we've made" in expanding OB-GYN residency training.

Dr. Robert Golden, also the vice chancellor for medical affairs at UW-Madison, said the state's obstetrics and gynecology rural residency training track has been "a wonderful way to attract bright young physicians" into the field that's focused on women's reproductive health.

Speaking during a recent Competitive Wisconsin event held at Western Technical College in Mauston, Golden said some of the program's top students interested in OB-GYN had been hoping to complete residencies in Wisconsin.

"Quite frankly, they're seriously reconsidering that and looking at competitive programs in Illinois and in California because of the Dobbs decision," referring to the U.S. Supreme Court this summer ruling the right to abortion is not guaranteed.

That's of particular concern, he explained, because dozens of counties in Wisconsin don't have any OB-GYN doctors.

"We also are struggling in recruiting across the full continuum, not just with nurses and doctors, but with other vital members of the health care family, because they aren't so sure they want to move into a state that is among the most polarized politically and where women's health is really endangered," he said.

Beyond recruitment and training for health care workers, the court's decision is also raising troubling questions for existing practitioners, Golden said. He said he's heard from gynecological oncologists who are worried about "moral and legal dilemmas" arising from diagnosing aggressive cancers in women who are also pregnant.

“What are the safeguards for providing the kind of quality care and safe care that they need?” he said.

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*-By Alex Moe*