



# REGULATION OF MISSOURI ABORTION FACILITIES

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **Does DHSS determine whether a termination of a pregnancy is conducted legally or illegally?**

No. DHSS regulates abortion facilities within the state to ensure procedures are conducted safely and consistent with health standards of facilities care and in compliance with the statutory framework for licensure and regulation. The enforcement of the criminal provisions of state statute are left to local law enforcement agencies, local prosecuting attorneys, and the Missouri Attorney General's Office for enforcement.

### **Can DHSS provide legal advice so that medical professionals and patients can know what is and is not legal?**

No. DHSS is not authorized to provide legal advice to third parties. The relevant statutory provisions regarding abortion can be found within [Chapter 188 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri](#).

### **What constitutes a “medical emergency” that allows a doctor to provide an abortion?**

The legal definition of a “medical emergency” can be found [here](#). The statutory language is found [here](#). Whether a particular condition fits this definition depends on what constitutes “reasonable medical judgment.” The definition is intended to protect pregnant women from a severe risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function or death.

### **What constitutes reasonable medical judgment in regards to whether a doctor can provide an abortion?**

The legal definition of “reasonable medical judgment” can be found [here](#). The definition is intended to allow [reasonably prudent physicians](#) who have studied the conditions and treatments flexibility to tailor their recommendations to the unique health care needs of individual patients. Oftentimes what is reasonable depends on acceptable standards of care developed by doctors and medical professionals.