Caring for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Patients Seeking Abortion:

A Provider Practice Guide

napawf
NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN WOMEN'S FORUM

Ibis Reproductive Health



About this guide

This guide draws on research conducted by the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) and Ibis Reproductive Health (Ibis) to better understand the experiences and needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) people seeking abortion care. It is intended for abortion care providers, clinic staff, patient navigators, and others who support patients before, during, and after abortion care. It includes research-informed recommendations for individual patient interactions, clinic-level practices that can help create a more supportive care environment, and a list of resources that providers can share with patients. The accompanying sample questions and checklist are designed to help providers put these recommendations into practice.

AANHPI communities are extraordinarily diverse, and this guide is not intended to represent every AANHPI patient's experience. It instead identifies recurring themes from the research and offers practical ways providers can respond without making assumptions about a patient's culture, family, religion, immigration status, language, or beliefs.

What AANHPI patients want providers to know

Providers can build trust through culturally responsive care

What we heard

Patients shared they value providers who understand how culture, family, and language can impact how someone approaches abortion. Language access was also important, but patients emphasized that translated materials cannot replace meaningful conversation.

What providers can do

Create opportunities for patients to share what matters to them

- Ask open-ended questions rather than making assumptions based on race, ethnicity, religion, or language.

Make language access part of routine care

- Ask patients what language they prefer to use and offer a qualified medical interpreter when needed, even if the patient has a family member or friend who can interpret. Ask the patient whether they want that person involved; don't assume they want or prefer them to interpret. A qualified interpreter can help ensure accurate communication and patient privacy. Translated materials are helpful to have on hand, but patients must also have opportunities to ask questions and discuss their circumstances in their preferred language.

What clinics can do

Consider cultural navigation and community partnerships

- Cultural navigators and community health workers can help bridge communication and cultural differences. Building relationships with AANHPI-serving community organizations can also help clinics better understand and respond to community-specific needs.

Support is essential throughout the abortion process

What we heard

Patients shared their need for practical and emotional support before, during, and after an abortion. Several patients also shared how experiencing sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or other trauma increased their need for support.

What providers can do

Ask about practical needs without making assumptions

- Patients may need help with transportation, childcare, time away from work, or a safe, private place to recover.

Use trauma-informed practices throughout care

- Explain what will happen before each step of an examination or procedure, ask for the patient's permission before touching them, and offer options whenever possible. Emphasize that the patient can ask questions, take a break, or change their mind who is present during their care at any time during the appointment.

Let patients define their support systems

- Family and loved ones can provide essential support, but they can also create conflict. Ask patients who, if anyone, they want involved in their care.

What clinics can do

Connect patients to wraparound services

- Maintain up-to-date referrals for abortion doulas, patient navigators, transportation programs, childcare assistance, and culturally responsive mental health services. Whenever possible, establish relationships with AANHPI-serving organizations.

People need information that reflects the realities of the abortion process

What we heard

Some patients described wanting more information about the different kinds of abortion methods and what to expect throughout the abortion experience.

Patients also described why they preferred one abortion method over another. For example, one person who had a medication abortion said they wouldn't choose that method again without their partner's caregiving support.

Patients also sought out information online from people with lived experience, particularly when clinical materials did not answer practical questions. Patients wanted to understand what to expect from each step of the abortion process and how it might impact their daily lives or routines.

What providers can do

Present the full range of clinically appropriate options

- Providers should explain all the abortion methods that are appropriate given the patient's medical circumstances and explain the patient's medical eligibility for each option. This should include how each option works, what the process involves, potential side effects and complications, and what follow-up

may look like. Providers should also clearly explain when a particular method is not clinically appropriate or available while ensuring patients understand what options remain available to them. Information should be presented neutrally and without judgment so patients can make informed decisions based on their individual needs and circumstances.

Explain what to expect before, during, and after an abortion

- Patients should receive clear information about pain, bleeding, cramping, recovery time, and when to seek additional medical care. Whenever possible, provide materials in patients' preferred languages and avoid medical jargon. Before choosing a format, consider whether patients can access the technology it requires, and share information in ways that respect their language, culture, and preferences.

Discuss practical considerations alongside medical information

- Patients also need to consider transportation, childcare, time off work, cost, travel, and whether they have a safe, private place to recover. These considerations can meaningfully affect which abortion option is best for a patient.

Leave room for questions

- Patients may arrive with information they have gathered from family members, friends, or social media. Asking what they already know creates an opportunity to answer questions, correct misinformation, and ensure they have everything they need to make an informed decision.

Strong privacy and immigration protections are essential

What we heard

Several of the patients mentioned concerns around immigration status, medical records, family members, and community judgment can affect whether, when, and how they seek abortion care. They expressed concerns about who has access to their information, how to retain privacy when seeking care, and whether their medical information could be used for immigration enforcement.

What providers can do

Explain the limits of confidentiality

- Patients should understand what information is collected, how it is stored, who can access it, and when information may be disclosed. Provide clear information about how the clinic responds to requests from law enforcement or other government agencies.

Protect privacy when communicating with patients

- Ask whether it is safe to call, leave voicemails, send text messages, use patient portals, or mail information. Work with the patient to identify the safest available communication and payment options.

What clinics can do

Protect patient information throughout the clinic

- Conduct conversations about abortion, immigration, insurance, and other sensitive matters in private spaces. Position computer screens, records, sign-in materials, and other patient information so they cannot be viewed by others.

Collect only the information necessary to provide care

- Clinics should avoid asking about immigration or citizenship status unless the information is required for a specific purpose. When it must be collected, explain why it is needed, how it will

be used, where it will be recorded, and who may have access to it. Clinics should consult legal and compliance experts when developing policies for collecting and retaining immigration information.

Make sure your patients are informed of their rights

- Maintain timely know-your-rights information from trusted immigrant rights and legal service organizations. When a patient has questions about immigration enforcement or their legal rights, connect them with reliable legal support.

Broader structural conditions shape abortion access

What we heard

Patients described how overlapping concerns around state abortion laws, immigration, transportation, and family circumstances can affect access to care. We also heard providers express a need for patient wrap-around services such as mental health care or support with transportation.

What providers can do

Reduce the burden on patients

- Whenever possible, help patients connect directly with resources rather than simply providing a list of phone numbers or websites. Connecting patients directly can make it more likely they will actually use the resource and helps ensure they will not need to delay or forgo care.

Look beyond the immediate clinical need

- A patient who delays care, misses an appointment, or struggles to follow a treatment plan may be navigating issues that are not immediately visible to a provider.

What clinics can do

Build strong referral networks

- Maintain connections to organizations that can assist with financial support, transportation, childcare, immigration-related legal services, intimate partner violence, and mental health needs.

Conclusion

Culturally responsive abortion care does not mean knowing everything about every AANHPI community, nor is it possible to do so. It means creating a health care environment where patients can communicate what they need, and providers have the tools and resources to respond.

More about the research

Between April and June 2026, NAPAWF and Ibis held two focus group discussions with a total of seven AANHPI people who had abortion experiences as recently as within the last few months, and as long as 30+ years ago. We also held six key informant interviews with AANHPI abortion providers and support workers who help people access abortion care. The findings highlighted several recurring themes, including patients need strong support systems and clear information about abortion options, what to expect, and where to find trustworthy guidance. They also showed care that respects patients' cultures, language access, and representation can build trust and help patients feel understood.

Caring for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Patients Seeking Abortion:

Questions to Support Patient-Centered Care

Overview

These questions are designed to help providers translate the guide's recommendations into patient-centered questions. Use these questions as conversation starters, choosing the ones that are relevant to each patient and their care.

Understanding what matters to the patient

- Is there anything you want us to know about your situation before we discuss your care plan?
- Are there family or cultural circumstances you'd like us to keep in mind?

Language access

- What language would you prefer to use when talking about your care?
- What language do you prefer for written materials?
- Would you prefer to speak with a medical interpreter?

Abortion options

- Would you like me to walk you through the different abortion options available to you?

- As you think about your options, what matters most to you—for example, privacy, pain management, timing, or being at home?
- What questions do you have about what abortion might look or feel like?

Practical needs and support

- Would you like information about abortion funds or other financial assistance programs?
- Do you have a safe and private place to recover after your abortion?
- Are there any other issues or barriers that could make it hard for you to get or complete your care?

Privacy and confidentiality

- What name and information should we use when communicating with you?
- Is it safe for us to call, text, email, or leave a voicemail for you?
- Would it be helpful to talk about what health care information can and cannot be shared?
- Are there any other privacy concerns you'd like us to know about?

Immigration-related concerns

- Do you have any safety concerns around seeking health care that you'd like to talk through?
- Would it be helpful to know more about what information the clinic has to collect and what we don't need to collect?

Caring for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Patients Seeking Abortion:

Clinic Checklist

Overview

This checklist is designed to help providers assess and strengthen the systems and practices that shape an AANHPI patient's experience of abortion care before the appointment, during the appointment, and after they leave. This checklist is not meant to recommend a singular approach to caring for AANHPI patients, but it can help make care more accessible and responsive.

Before the Patient Arrives

- ☐ Maintain an up-to-date list of:
  - Abortion doulas
  - Patient navigators
  - Transportation assistance
  - Childcare resources
  - Abortion funds and other financial assistance
  - Culturally responsive mental health services
  - Immigration legal services
  - Intimate partner violence resources
- ☐ Establish procedures for accessing qualified medical interpreters and offer an interpreter when appropriate.
- ☐ Ask the patient which ways of communicating are safe for them.
  - Phone Call
  - Voicemail
  - Text
  - Email
  - Patient portal

During the Appointment

- ☐ Begin with open-ended questions rather than assumptions about the patient's family, culture, religion, ethnicity, or beliefs.
- ☐ Provide information about privacy and confidentiality in clear, accessible language.
- ☐ Provide translated written materials wherever possible.
- ☐ Ask what matters most to the patient when creating a care plan.
- ☐ Correct misinformation without judgment.
- ☐ Explain each step before an examination or procedure and ask permission before touching the patient.
- ☐ Remind the patient they can take a break at any time.
- ☐ Explain all clinically appropriate abortion options, including:
    - How each option works
    - What the patient can expect
    - Pain and bleeding
    - Potential risks and complications
    - Recovery
    - Follow-up
    - When to seek additional medical care
- ☐ Clearly explain if an option is not medically appropriate and discuss what options remain.
- ☐ Discuss practical needs the patient may have:
    - Cost
    - Transportation
    - Childcare
    - Recovery location
    - Privacy
- ☐ Ask whether the patient wants anyone else involved in their care.

Before the Patient Leaves

- ☐ Confirm the patient's understanding of their care by asking them

to tell you what they heard in their own words. Make sure the patient knows:

- What symptoms are expected
- What warning signs require medical attention
- Who to contact with questions
- Where to seek emergency care if needed
- What follow-up is recommended

- ☐ Offer direct connections to relevant support services.
- ☐ Explain what follow-up care may look like, and whether an in-person, telehealth, or self-assessment option is appropriate.
- ☐ Confirm the safest way to communicate any follow-up information.

Patient Resources

Patients seeking abortion care often need support beyond clinical services, including finding help covering costs, protecting their privacy, or accessing medical or emotional support. Whenever possible, explain what a resource offers and confirm that it is safe to share information through their preferred contact method.

Finding Abortion Care

- **I Need an A:** Helps patients find verified abortion clinics and abortion pills by mail.
- **A Teen's Guide to Accessing Abortion:** Provides information for minors navigating abortion access.

- **Plan C:** Provides information on how to access abortion pills by mail in every state.

Paying for Care

- **National Network of Abortion Funds:** Connects patients with abortion funds that can help with abortion costs and logistical support.
- **State Abortion Coverage Map:** Information on how each state regulates insurance coverage of abortion in Medicaid, the ACA Marketplaces, and private insurance.

Medical Questions and Emotional Support

- **Exhale Pro-Voice:** Provides confidential, nonjudgmental emotional support after an abortion through a text-based service.
- **Miscarriage & Abortion Hotline:** Offers confidential, evidence-based medical support from clinicians for questions related to abortion and miscarriage.

Legal Support

- **Know Your Rights:** Provides essential know your rights information for immigrant families deciding to get health care or apply for health insurance.
- **If/When/How's Repro Legal Helpline:** Provides legal support related to abortion, pregnancy, birth, parenting, and emergency support for patients contacted by law enforcement or facing arrest.

Privacy

- **Digital Defense Fund's Guide to Abortion Privacy:** Practical guide on abortion privacy, outlining how to minimize digital footprints, secure search histories, and manage device settings safely.