



May 30, 2025

**Dear Esteemed UN Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health,**

As a coalition of human rights, reproductive health research, and reproductive justice organizations, we write to submit information in response to [the Special Rapporteur's call for submissions](#) to support the development of your upcoming thematic report to the 80th session of the General Assembly, in October 2025 - "Health and care workers: The oath takers & defenders of the right to health". The Coalition appreciates the Special Rapporteur's focus on health and care workers as human rights defenders, and your commitment to advancing reproductive justice and human rights through an intersectional, anti-racist, anti-colonial lens.

Our coalition recently developed a [joint submission to the UN Human Rights Council](#) before the USA's upcoming 4th Universal Periodic Review. This submission focused on the significant deterioration of sexual and reproductive rights and justice across the country since the elimination of a federal right to abortion and amid a broader undermining of rights in the USA.

The coalition believes that the information in our joint USA-UPR submission is particularly relevant to **question 2** of the Special Rapporteur's current [call for submissions](#). It provides first-hand

testimony from health and care workers that reveals the stark realities they face when attempting to provide care in accordance with human rights norms and standards.

**In particular, the submission:**

- Highlights that in addition to the grave impacts faced by pregnant people needing abortions, *medical providers, and those who assist individuals to access sexual and reproductive healthcare* are facing increasing criminalization, discrimination, and stigmatization.
- Presents quantitative research and qualitative data gathered from healthcare providers, researchers, doulas, abortion funds, and pregnant and/or previously pregnant individuals directly impacted by restrictive abortion laws (with a focus on in southern states) to reveal *the lived realities, harms faced by and restraints imposed on health and care providers*, impeding their ability to protect and defend the right to health in the US.
- Discusses that by removing constitutional protections for abortion and empowering states *to criminalize persons providing and supporting abortion*, the US has engaged in prohibited retrogressive measures in direct contravention of its treaty obligations and recommendations it accepted during its 3rd UPR.

The attached joint submission may be read in conjunction with [an earlier submission that the Global Justice Center developed](#) in response to your [initial call for submissions](#) focusing on “Health and care workers as defenders of the right to health” in preparation for your upcoming report to the Human Rights Council in June 2025.<sup>1</sup>

We thank the Special Rapporteur for considering our coalition’s research and analysis, and we hope it complements and contributes to your upcoming report to the UN General Assembly. We hope that the tireless work of human rights defenders in the US, who have dedicated themselves and risked their own lives, health, and well-being to work toward the realization of human rights in their communities, is made public to support broader recognition of human rights defenders.

With warm regards,

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Tyler Barbarin, Louisiana Abortion Fund, Director of Grants and Development

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<sup>1</sup> *Submission to UN Special Rapporteur on Health — Healthcare Workers and the U.S. Abortion Rights Crisis*, Global Justice Center (Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025), <https://www.globaljusticecenter.net/submission-to-un-special-rapporteur-on-health-healthcare-workers-and-the-u-s-abortion-rights-crisis/>.

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