



— JOINT STATEMENT —

# Reports of Hysterectomies Performed Without Consent

Recent reports about medically unnecessary hysterectomies performed without full and informed patient consent in a facility operated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement are deeply disturbing. Any coercive medical treatment of immigrant persons is unacceptable, unethical, and harmful.

We urge the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General to conduct a thorough, conclusive inquiry into these reports; to publicly release the results of the inquiry; and to ensure that evidence-based, patient-centered care is provided equitably to all persons detained at Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities.

Coercive or forcible sterilization procedures are unethical and should never be performed. A hysterectomy can be an essential and lifesaving medical procedure, but it should never be forced upon any person without their explicit understanding and consent. Moreover, sterilization through any approach is a permanent method of birth control; if performed without informed consent, this would strip patients of their right to future reproductive decision-making and be wholly unethical and immoral.

Ultimately, respect for a person's bodily and reproductive autonomy and their full, voluntary consent and participation in the medical decision-making process, in their preferred language, must be paramount. Further, the guiding ethical principles of autonomy and justice are particularly important when caring for detained immigrant persons, as the nature of detention often impedes the ability of patients to provide true and voluntary informed consent.

## RESOURCES

- [Joint Statement: Collective Action Addressing Racism](#)
- [ACOG Committee Opinion 695: Sterilization of Women: Ethical Issues and Considerations](#)
- [ACOG Committee Opinion 439: Informed Consent](#)
- [ACOG Committee Opinion 676: Health Literacy to Promote Quality Of Care](#)
- [ACOG Committee Opinion 578: Elective Surgery and Patient Choice](#)
- [ACOG Practice Bulletin 208: Benefits and Risks of Sterilization](#)