SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

# ALLIANCE FOR FERTILITY PRESERVATION

## DC Policy Summit Summary

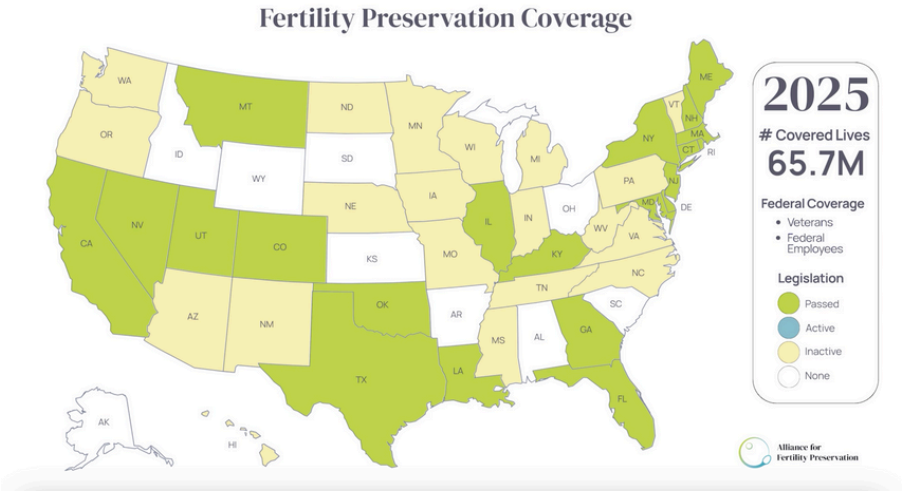
## KEYNOTE ADDRESS
## A Call to Persevere Amid Policy Uncertainty

The keynote address was delivered by Katie Keith, Founding Director of the Center for Health Policy and the Law at Georgetown Law and former Deputy Director of the White House Gender Policy Council. Keith congratulated advocates on their successes while warning of federal actions threatening Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies and Medicaid funding—policies that could undermine the health care safety net. She urged attendees to continue emphasize that fertility preservation is considered standard of care and to persist in advancing change through a state-by-state approach that could ultimately influence federal policy.

## NATIONAL LEADERS CONVENE FOR INAUGURAL FERTILITY PRESERVATION POLICY SUMMIT

On September 11, 2025, the Alliance for Fertility Preservation (AFP) hosted its first national policy summit in Washington, D.C., bringing together lawmakers, clinicians, researchers, and patient advocates dedicated to expanding insurance coverage for medically necessary fertility preservation. The event marked a milestone in a movement that began more than two decades ago, when medical societies first recognized fertility preservation as an essential component of care for patients facing treatments that threaten their reproductive health.

Speakers opened with a review of this 20-year journey—from early clinical guidance from ASRM and ASCO, to the 2004 call for insurance coverage by the President's Cancer Panel, to the first state-level legislative victories in Connecticut and Rhode Island in 2017. Since then, momentum has grown across the country. Twenty-one states, the District of Columbia, and two federal health plans now include fertility preservation coverage, extending access to an estimated sixty-five million Americans. Despite these advances, participants agreed that much remains to be done to ensure equitable access nationwide.



## The Power of a Personal Story

Moving testimony was delivered by Amelia Hendricks, believed to be the first patient to use Maryland's 2018 fertility preservation benefit. She described her journey from a young ovarian cancer patient to an expectant parent, emphasizing how early fertility discussions and insurance coverage made parenthood possible. Her story – which brought attendees to their feet – set a deeply human tone that echoed throughout the day's policy panels.

## KEYNOTE PANEL
## Lessons from the DMV: State Leadership in Action

A highlight of the summit was a panel featuring Maryland Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, D.C. Council Member Christina Henderson, and Virginia Delegate Dan Helmer, who shared insights from their respective legislative efforts.

Delegate Peña-Melnyk recalled that she was inspired to sponsor Maryland's 2018 legislation after outreach from the Ulman Foundation. Despite early opposition, her passionate advocacy saw the bill pass with bipartisan support. She now hopes to close remaining coverage gaps in the small group and individual markets.

Council Member Henderson explained that she authored D.C.'s infertility coverage bill after discovering the District lacked a mandate. Following its passage, the city added infertility coverage to its Essential Health Benefits (EHB) benchmark plan, and her office is exploring options to include Medicaid in the future.

Delegate Helmer, motivated by his sister's experience with breast cancer at a young age, has championed similar coverage in Virginia. Although Virginia has not yet enacted a law, Helmer continues to push for change as a member of the Health Insurance Reform Commission (HIRC), aiming to add fertility preservation and infertility coverage to the state's EHB benchmark plan.

The panel closed with moving remarks from Tamika Felder (Cervivor), a long-time patient advocate who testified in support of Delegate Peña-Melnyk's bill seven years ago. She chose that moment to publicly disclose her own infertility for the first time, in the hopes that it would help future patients – a wish that was realized by Amelia's experience.


## National Perspectives on Advocacy and Access

A second panel, moderated by Terri Stewart (EMDS) broadened the discussion to considerations for coverage across the country. Panelists Sean Tipton (American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), Dr. Micah Hill (Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART) and Shady Grove Fertility), and Lucy Culp (Blood Cancer United) shared their insights.

The panelists noted that fertility preservation coverage could serve as an initial step toward broader infertility care. They discussed the importance of grounding advocacy efforts in evidence-based medicine rather than ideology—a posture which could threaten access to medically necessary preservation options. The panelists also acknowledged that despite the existence of some federal coverages, including those for veterans and federal employees, many providers remain unaware of these benefits and their nuances. Strategies such as greater involvement of clinicians who see firsthand how fertility loss impacts patients as well as increased use of data and patient appeals to help drive regulatory action, were proffered as potential solutions toward improved access.

## A Role for Clinicians

Dr. Terri Woodard (MD Anderson) shared her own evolution from physician to policy advocate. She described how heart-wrenching conversations with patients who could not afford fertility preservation inspired her to share her professional expertise with lawmakers about the need for coverage legislation in Texas—a campaign that ultimately succeeded five years later.

## Catalyzing Patient Advocacy

Concrete strategies for advocacy were laid out in remarks from Katie Beall, a breast cancer survivor whose tireless efforts culminated with the passage of Montana's 2023 fertility preservation law. Beall encouraged attendees to form coalitions, build relationships with local legislators, and share their stories. Her inspirational experience underscored a theme echoed throughout the day: progress is driven not only by research, policy, and legislation, but also by the lived experiences of patients that move policymakers to act.

## Implementation Challenges & Opportunities

The summit's final panel focused on the complexities of implementation once coverage laws are in place. Becca O'Connor (ASRM) queried panelists Dr. Irene Su (UC San Diego), Dr. Doug Fair (Huntsman Cancer Institute), and Dr. Paula Brady (Columbia Fertility) about the patient access barriers they've encountered where coverage had been enacted—in California, Utah, and New York, respectively.

The panelists noted that as more states require fertility preservation coverage, attention must shift from policy adoption to implementation. They stated that this process is proving to be complex: even when patients are entitled to benefits, they often encounter a confusing web of insurance requirements, state regulations, and clinical processes that can delay or discourage care.

Specific hurdles to Medicaid such as lengthy timelines for federal approval of the benefit, administrative burdens, and low reimbursement rates were noted, based on experience in Utah. Broader structural issues to access in the private market were also discussed. The growing role of private equity in fertility care along with widespread clinic unwillingness to accept insurance favored cash-based business models that constrict equitable access, even where insurance mandates have been achieved.

On a positive note, the panel described ways that some infertility practices are developing systems to better understand the financial and insurance aspects of FP coverage, and to navigate patients effectively. In summary, participants stressed that while legislative victories are critical, additional measures are needed for proper implementation. They cited provider commitment and engagement, insurer oversight, and regulatory enforcement as crucial in ensuring patients receive the fertility preservation coverage to which they are entitled.


## Building Momentum for the Future

The summit closed with a message of hope and determination to continue the call for better and more equitable access. Across all sessions, one theme was clear: access to fertility preservation is not only about changing laws, it is also about changing lives.

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