

August 2, 2022

Dear ACMG members and ACMG Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting attendees,

As ACMG continues to prepare for the 2023 ACMG Annual Clinical Genetics Meeting, I want to acknowledge concerns that have been raised regarding the 2023 meeting location. As you may know, the 2023 meeting is scheduled to be held March 14-18, 2023 in Salt Lake City, Utah, one of many states that has a so-called abortion “trigger law” (SB 174) that went into effect after the US Supreme Court announced their decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, 2022. As of June 27, 2022, Utah’s trigger law, which would severely restrict abortion access in the state, is on temporary hold due to a legal challenge from the Planned Parenthood Association of Utah; however, a 2019 law is now in effect banning most abortions after 18 weeks.

In the past, Salt Lake City was ranked by our meeting attendees as one of their favorite meeting locations, and that was a significant factor in our decision to hold our conference there again in 2023. However, the ACMG Board of Directors and leadership understand why some members of the medical genetics community may no longer want to attend a meeting at this location. We share your concerns and also acknowledge the diversity in views and opinions among our members and meeting attendees. As a genetics and genomics medical association, the ACMG stands by patients’ rights to make informed reproductive health decisions based on what is best for them and their family, and to safeguard their access to all reproductive options. We have been visible and vocal in vehemently opposing all legislative interference in the patient-clinician relationship (see recent joint statements [here](#) and [here](#)).

After much deliberation, careful consideration of all options, and assessment of the potential impact of each option, ACMG has made the difficult decision to proceed with the in-person meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Contracts for these types of large meetings must be signed years in advance. Canceling or attempting to relocate our meeting at this point would be a complex undertaking that would severely tax our resources and have significant financial impact on the College, including our ability to continue to provide the excellent education and resources you have come to expect from the ACMG. Problematic legislation can, of course, be passed by any state at any time, but we do not anticipate that our future sites with existing contracts after 2023 will pass laws similar to the above. We will continue to carefully consider the existence of or potential for passage of discriminatory laws of any type as we evaluate future meeting sites but, again, laws that run counter to ACMG’s principles can arise at any time, in any location.

As we look ahead to our 2023 meeting in Salt Lake City, we are cognizant that boycotting meetings negatively impacts the people who may need our support the most, such as the frontline service industry workers at the Salt Palace Convention Center, as well as those at local hotels and restaurants. Among these are local workers and their families, including pregnant individuals,

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whose healthcare access is being threatened. Studies have shown that travel bans and boycotts have little to no impact on the legislative body passing restrictive or discriminatory laws. It should also be noted that municipalities are not always in lockstep with their state government's legislative decisions. ACMG is pleased that Salt Lake County Mayor [Jenny Wilson penned a strong opinion piece](#) in *The Salt Lake Tribune* vehemently opposing both the US Supreme Court decision and her home state's trigger law.

The ACMG will not abandon our members, attendees and patients who reside in Utah. Instead, we will explore ways that ACMG and our meeting attendees can engage in advocacy activities that support access to genetic services in Utah. We all have the opportunity to make a positive impact in Utah through advocacy, service and donations. The 2023 program will also include content addressing reproductive healthcare and the impact of legislative interference on medical geneticists and patients. In addition, the ACMG Foundation will continue our tradition of partnering with local patient organizations to provide customized bicycles to patients with special needs.

The ACMG understands and respects that each member of the medical genetics community must make their own decision about whether attending the meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah is right for them. For those who decide not to travel to Salt Lake City, ACMG is exploring remote learning and/or on demand options. Further information on digital options will be available when registration opens in October.

After two years of not holding an in-person ACMG Annual Meeting due to COVID-19, I was delighted to see overjoyed members of the medical genetics community greeting each other in person at the 2022 meeting in Nashville. I hope to see many of you in that same wonderful spirit in March 2023 in Salt Lake City as we enjoy another excellent educational program and support our colleagues and patients in Utah.

Sincerely,



Marc S. Williams, MD, FACMG
President
The American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics