



Sexual and reproductive health information and LIS

Barbara Alvarez

August 19, 2022

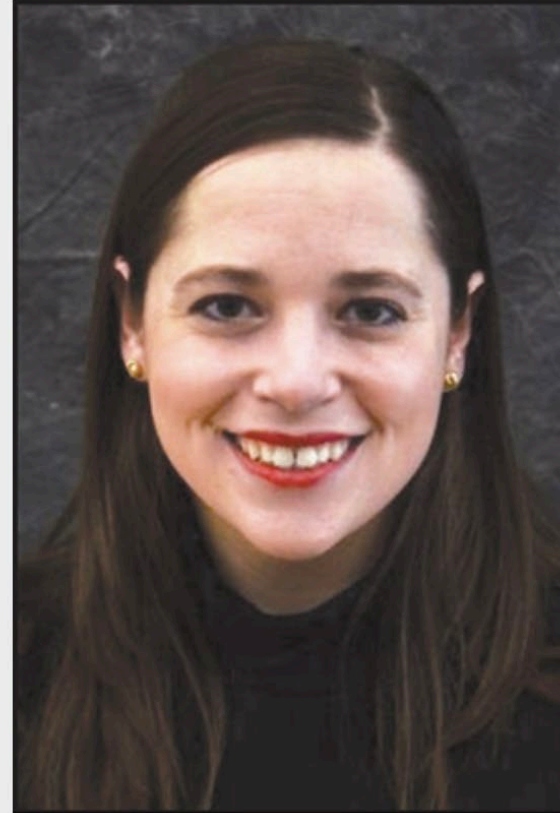
For WiLS



Health Partner

Barbara Alvarez, while teaching at three iSchools, focuses on building community partnerships for health. To investigate the pandemic's impact on abortion services for Wisconsin residents, Alvarez conducted weekly mystery calls to 29 abortion clinics in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, and upper Michigan. "Already restrictive legislation in Wisconsin was only compounded by the pandemic. This limits people's options and increases barriers," says Alvarez, who has worked as a research assistant for the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Collaborative for Reproductive Equity.

Alvarez participated on a research team where their



CURRENT POSITION

Associate Lecturer, Instructor,
University of Wisconsin-Madison,
University of Illinois Urbana-
Champaign, and Clarion University, PA

Background

MLIS from University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign

8 years in libraries, including public, corporate, and archives

8 years teaching webinars and online classes in marketing, communications, and information access

3+ years teaching university-level LIS classes

PhD student University of Wisconsin-Madison

Community engagement

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016 ISSUE
FEATURE ARTICLE

FEATURE | Public Libraries in the Age of Fake News

Scrolling through my Twitter feed the afternoon after the election, I was surprised to see so many people tweeting that the results were in: Donald Trump had won the popular vote. It surprised me because earlier that morning I had heard on the radio that Hillary Clinton was pulling even further ahead of Trump. I did some fact-checking and it became clear: I had witnessed another example of the viral spread of fake news.

Public Libraries and the Dismantling of Disinformation

Barbara Alvarez / barbara.ann.alvarez@gmail.com

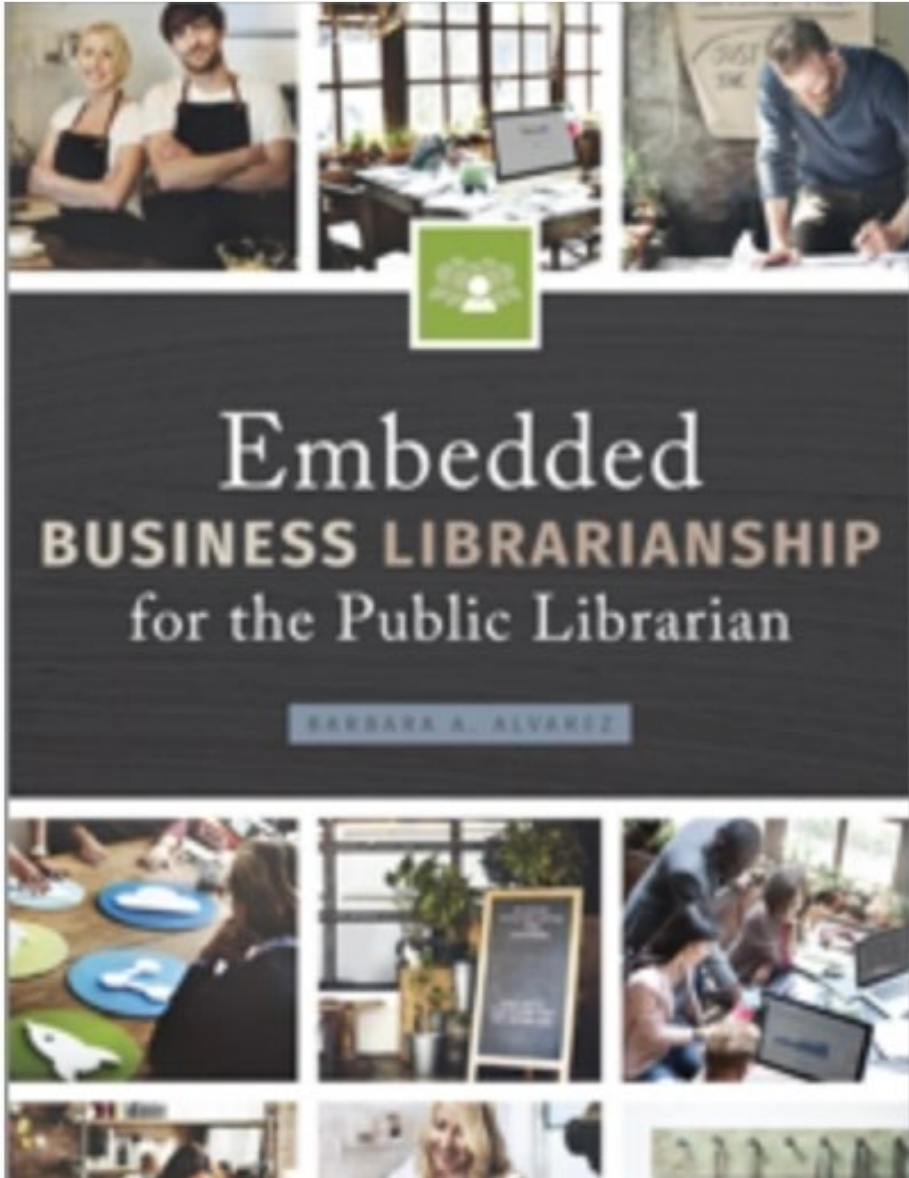
The American Heritage Project

A LEGACY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

Barbara A. Alvarez
Independent Scholar

ABSTRACT: From 1951 to 1955, the American Library Association's (ALA) national reading and discussion program, the American Heritage Project, facilitated community conversations about democracy across public libraries in the United States. In partnership between the ALA and the Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education, the American Heritage Project was born from decades of emerging adult education programs across the United States that existed inside and outside of public libraries. The American Heritage Project is significant because it developed a platform of discussion groups that demonstrated the library's newly established commitment to defending intellectual freedom through adult education.

KEYWORDS: adult education, community discussions, censorship, American Heritage Project, public libraries



*EMBEDDED BUSINESS
LIBRARIANSHIP FOR
THE PUBLIC LIBRARIAN
(2016- ALA EDITIONS)*



Memory Connection Center Opens



North Shore librarians noticed that patrons came to the library looking for short books and audiobooks to give their loved ones with dementia. But these resources were not enough for what these caregivers and loved ones needed to thrive. So the North Shore Library decided to take services to the next level and partner with the *Milwaukee County Department on Aging* to become the first library Memory Connection Center in the nation.

As a Memory Connection Center, the library's goal is to empower caregivers with the knowledge, resources, support and programs that are necessary to prepare

families and individuals for the journey of caring for someone diagnosed with dementia. Often dementia is misunderstood or stigmatized, leaving families and caregivers unsure of where and how to seek resources, guidance and assistance for their loved ones.

Before the library could officially unveil itself as a dementia-friendly library, the staff underwent training. Staff learned about different types of dementia, the impacts it can have on the individual and the family, and even went through a simulated experience to understand how those with dementia interact with their surroundings.

On April 20, 2018, with 100 attendees, including state legislators and community organizers, the library's resource center was unveiled. Afterwards, the library hosted a Memory Fair where fifteen different organizations and businesses that provide memory care services to the community discussed their services with caregivers.

The Memory Connection Center at the North Shore Library is equipped with reference books, recommended reading lists, and resources to community organizations. There is also a referral form that visitors can fill out that will directly connect them with a dementia specialist who can help them navigate their next steps. A librarian can help those who are seeking information about dementia resources get started with this process. Twenty-three members of the community have come to the Memory Connection Center, and this number keeps growing.

In addition to material resources, the North Shore Library has a variety of participatory experiences. Each month the North Shore Library hosts a new program that connects caregivers with each other and with experts who speak about legal, financial and logistical steps. The North Shore Library even hosted former Governor Martin J. Schreiber, author of *My Two Elaines*, to share his experiences as a caregiver to his wife.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

*ENTER
REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH...*

Sexual and reproductive health is an information access issue

- The 2020 interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights explicitly states that “The American Library Association stringently and unequivocally maintains that libraries and librarians have an obligation to resist efforts that systematically exclude materials dealing with any subject matter, including sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.”
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 19 states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”
- World Health Organization (WHO): Sexual health and well-being is dependent on “access to comprehensive, good-quality information about sex and sexuality.” WHO explains that sexual health is not only important for individual human dignity, but that it is important to the proper functioning of “the social and economic development of communities and countries”

Let's look at Wisconsin...

1849 pre-Civil War law on the books that makes performing an abortion a criminal act

Prior to the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, state-mandated counseling sessions that add significant barriers to access

Telemedicine for abortion is illegal, although the Food and Drug Administration says that it is safe

Catholic hospitals run 1/3 of hospitals in Wisconsin- many do not disclose Religious Directives. Most of these are in rural and urban areas

Black maternal mortality is five times higher in Wisconsin than white maternal mortality. Black infants' risk of death is double the state's average

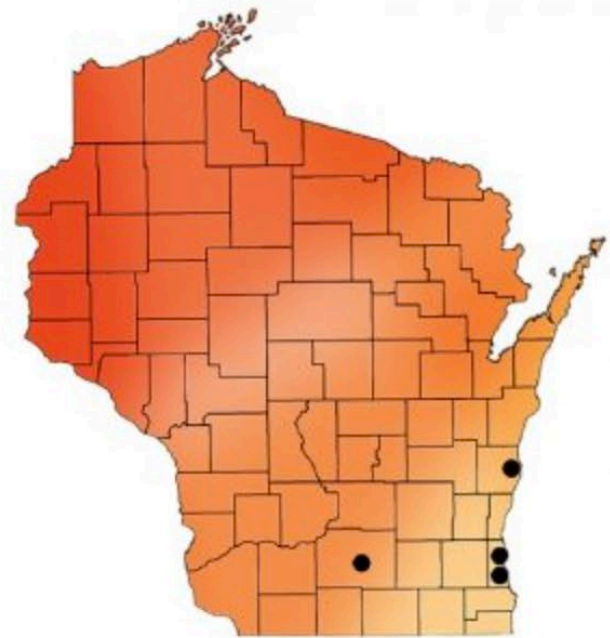
Nearly 100 Crisis Pregnancy Centers in Wisconsin. CPCs in 14 states, including Wisconsin, collected more than \$40 million tax payer dollars in 2018

CPCs promote abortion reversal pills which are not founded in science

Only 17 states require that sex ed be medically accurate- Wisconsin is not one of them

Valley and Alvarez's new research on medication abortion policy appears in Scholars Strategy Network

Posted on [April 8, 2021](#)



Unhappily Pregnant in the Pandemic:

The Effects of COVID-19 on Wait Times and Abortion Services for Wisconsin Residents Compared to Bordering States

Objective:

To track the impacts of COVID-19 on wait times and other aspects of abortion healthcare in Wisconsin compared to bordering states with varying state-level restrictions.

Methods:

From March 25 to June 17, 2020, investigators posing as 8-weeks-pregnant clients made weekly mystery calls to 29 abortion clinics in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, and upper Michigan to determine wait times and any COVID-related changes to abortion services.



- 4 clinics
- Mandatory 24-hour waiting period
- Same-provider for consent & abortion
- No telemedicine options
- 2 in-person visits required

- 17 Chicago-area clinics
- 13 open during research period
- No mandatory waiting period
- Telemedicine options available

- 5 clinics

Barbara A. Alvarez, MS, The Information School
Jenny A. Higgins, PhD, MPH, Obstetrics and Gynecology & Gender and Women's Studies



Abortion clinic locations

Key Takeaways

- People seeking abortions in Wisconsin already face many obstacles to timely and affordable care.

Results:

COVID's influence on abortion services in Wisconsin was conditioned by current state restrictions. For example:

- Iowa healthcare centers consistently recommended medication abortion by way of telemedicine because it reduced contact, but Wisconsin clinics could not offer patients this option.
- Average wait times were often longer and more confusing in Wisconsin, where existing laws only allow callers to get firm dates for the first, mandated in-person counseling visit—but rarely for the abortion appointment itself.
- Clinics in other states were often able to schedule patients sooner, with at least one less visit, due to fewer legal restrictions.

Book Online

Select Visit Reason

	WED 22 APR	THU 23 APR	FRI 24 APR	SAT 25 APR
Abortion Consultation	12:30 p		9:40 a	
Annual Exam (Telehealth)			+5	
Birth Control (Telehealth)			1:00 p	
Morning-After Pill (Telehealth)				

Legal restrictions allow telehealth appointments for all procedures **except** abortion counseling

RESEARCH LETTER | [VOLUME 225, ISSUE 3, P344-347, SEPTEMBER 01, 2021](#)

Medication or surgical abortion? An exploratory study of patient decision making on a popular social media platform

[Laura Jacques, MD](#)  • [Emma Carpenter, PhD](#) • [Taryn Valley, MA](#) • [Barbara Alvarez, MS](#) •

[Jenny Higgins, PhD, MPH](#)

Published: May 18, 2021 • DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2021.05.011> •



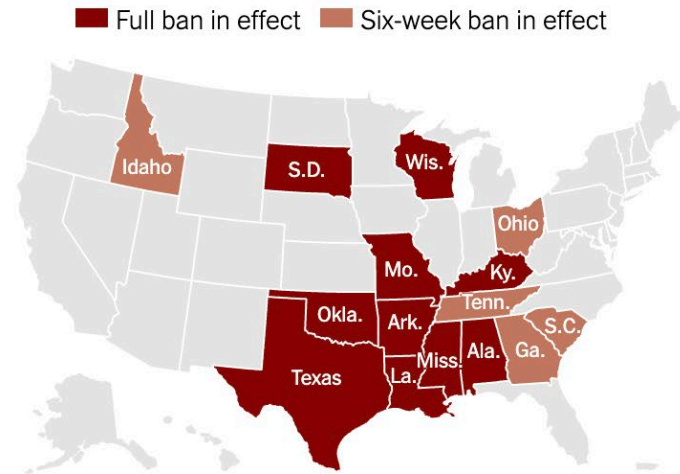
Reproductive Health at the Reference Desk

by [Barbara Alvarez](#)

May 23, 2022 | Filed in [News](#)



The leak of the U.S. Supreme Court's draft decision on abortion rights has sent people scrambling to understand the current state of abortion care in the United States. As tensions are at an all-time high, librarians have an opportunity to dispel some myths about abortion care and abortion access. Here is some background to help you answer patron questions that may arise.

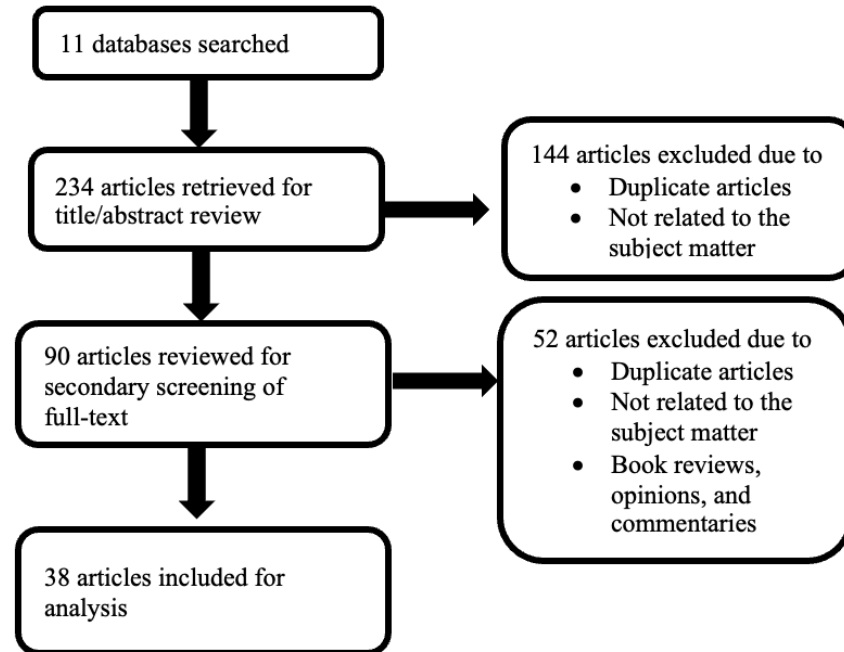


Abortion is now banned in at least ten states as laws restricting the procedure take effect following the Supreme Court's [decision](#) to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Another five states now ban abortion after six weeks of pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant.

WHAT CAN LIBRARIES DO?

Literature Review

Figure 1. Article selection process.



*Survey: 179
respondents from
public libraries in
the United States*

- Some of the comments
 - We live in an extremely conservative community. Sexual health is simply not discussed. The result is an antiquated mentality even within the library.
 - Just never thought of it outside of sexual identity.
 - concern about what kind of a reception it would get
 - topics of interest not requested by our community
 - Conservative town + "we've never done that" mentality of long time staffers.
 - Fear of community and political backlash
 - Our library director is concerned with the conservative nature of our community and state, that if we were to do more than what we do, that we would lose funding.
 - I hadn't thought about doing it honestly. Our Teen librarian has made some changes but our community is still pretty conservative.

*Services for
Sexual and
Reproductive
Health
Information for
Public Libraries*

ALA 2023

Collection development, programs,
community partnerships

Best practices and background
information

How can libraries fill the gaps?

This is not just about abortion!

- Gender affirming surgery is now illegal in Florida under Medicaid
- “Don’t say ‘gay’” laws being pushed in 16 states
- Future of contraception

*Information
access to SRH is
a human right*

*Information- or lack thereof- is
the focal point of how we
construct our lives.*

*Public libraries have a duty to
ensure information access for
all, including sexual and
reproductive health information*

Thank you!

- www.barbaralvarez.com
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/barbaraalvarez/>