

## Global Doctors for Choice Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

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### **Introduction:**

Global Doctors for Choice (GDC) was established in 2007 as an international network of physicians who advocate for access to safe, comprehensive, evidence-based reproductive health care, contributing the voice of medicine and science to civil society advocacy efforts. Since its inception, GDC has garnered enthusiastic support from the medical community and colleague organizations around the world.

GDC-trained physician-advocates have established a strong track record of defending reproductive health and rights at the local and national levels in their home countries, while becoming increasingly visible in international platforms. These experiences and our lessons learned form the basis for GDC's Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2020.

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to outline GDC's organizational and programmatic ambitions for the next five years. It frames how GDC will mobilize the voices of physicians around the world and enhance physician advocacy around reproductive health and rights. It is intended to give the rationale behind GDC's strategic initiatives rather than a detailed operational or managerial roadmap of how we will achieve them. The Strategic Plan will aid fundraising initiatives, and will be the anchor for the entire cycle of annual planning, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation through fiscal year ending 2020.

### **Global Doctors for Choice's Goal:**

To improve reproductive health outcomes and enhance women's autonomy to control their reproductive lives.

### **Global Doctors for Choice's Purpose:**

To provide a platform that promotes and facilitates exchange, support and collaboration among physicians from diverse medical disciplines and from around the world. This enables them to be effective advocates for comprehensive reproductive health and rights, with respect for autonomy, and thus to improve access to reproductive health care, including abortion.

### **Who We Are:**

Global Doctors for Choice (GDC) is a global network of physicians who advocate for reproductive rights and access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including safe

abortion. GDC is dedicated to the defense of human rights and to the provision of high-quality medical care grounded in science.

GDC supports physician-led Action Centers in Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Mexico, and South Africa. The Coordinating Team works from the United States and Malaysia.

GDC offers physicians the strategies and structure that they need to support reproductive health and rights. Together, these physicians form GDC's global network of members, and subscribe to the GDC Charter.

#### **GDC Charter:**

*Global Doctors for Choice's work is rights based, aligned with the international human rights framework, and focuses on sexual and reproductive health, while respecting the dignity and the autonomy of the health decisions of all people. All members subscribe to the following articles of the Charter:*

- *Global Doctors for Choice is a global network of member physicians whose overarching goal is to improve reproductive health outcomes and to enhance women's autonomy to control their reproductive lives.*
- *Global Doctors for Choice is committed to promoting exchange, support and collaboration among physicians around the world, so that they can actively work towards ensuring that all people have access to comprehensive reproductive health care, with respect for autonomy and the information and freedom of choice to make their own reproductive health decisions.*
- *Members will draw upon their experience in diverse medical disciplines to harness their medical credibility and scientific expertise as health care providers dedicated to the best medical interests of women and men from all over the world.*
- *Members will actively advocate to make comprehensive, evidence-based reproductive health care, including abortion, accessible for women worldwide.*

#### **Our Achievements:**

- We have established five physician-led Action Centers: Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Ghana and South Africa, and we are increasingly visible in other parts of the world.
- We have created an advocacy training curriculum and trainers' manual adaptable for use with physicians in different parts of the world. To date, hundreds of physicians from many countries have been trained using these resources, and are working towards improving access to reproductive health care where they live and work.
- We have responded quickly and consistently to political intrusions in the doctor-patient relationship and violations of reproductive health rights all over the world; we have developed a formal mechanism known as the Rapid Response Team to facilitate this type of action. Our responses include the development of topical position statements,

providing expert testimony, writing letters of support and letters to the editor, and signing-on advocacy statements or calls for action.

- We have provided leadership in addressing the impact of conscience-based refusal of care on patients, providers and health systems. We have published a GDC authored White Paper that examines prevalence, health consequences and policy landscape along with commentaries from several leaders from key institutions. Our Action Centers have pioneered research aimed at establishing the prevalence of conscience-based refusal as a necessary step towards developing policy responses. We currently have a major prevalence study underway in northern Ghana.
- We have formally established GDC as a Limited Liability Company (LLC), which is governed by its Board of Managers, comprising reproductive health experts and representatives of GDC's Action Centers, and staffed by the Executive Director and Program Manager.

### Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020:

In the coming five years, GDC's aim will be twofold: to sustain its past achievements and continue and strengthen existing programming, while fulfilling its potential of becoming a truly global movement.

Four strategic initiatives will shape our work in the coming years: training, advocacy, network-building, and management and support. In summary, GDC will:

- ⇒ equip physicians with the skills and tools to become reproductive health and rights advocates through **training**
- ⇒ support and guide these trained physicians as they bring a medical and evidence-based voice to **advocacy** work around local, national, regional, and international public policy issues
- ⇒ connect individual physicians through our **membership network** and facilitate the sharing of experiences, strategies, promising practices, lessons learned, and support and camaraderie
- ⇒ provide this dynamic global network of physicians **managerial support**, resources, and practical tools, in order to achieve GDC's full potential

Together, these intertwined initiatives will contribute to achieving GDC's goal of improving reproductive health outcomes, and enhancing women's autonomy to control their reproductive lives.

Activities related to the **training** initiative contribute to the improved capacity, knowledge and skills of physicians as advocates for reproductive health care and rights, and to increase the number of physicians with awareness and understanding of effective advocacy approaches and strategies. In GDC's trainings, physician-advocates are equipped with skills and tools to participate in debates and other activities aimed at reproductive health policy change. They

will effectively use medical and scientific evidence and reproductive rights arguments, and collaborate with others that share our overarching goal.

The **advocacy** initiative encompasses all advocacy, research and public positioning efforts of GDC and will result in bringing evidence-based medicine and a commitment to the reproductive rights of patients to bear on our efforts to improve local, national and international policies and practices that affect women's reproductive health. GDC's advocacy work will contribute to policy change, improving the ability of, and access to, comprehensive reproductive health care services, and safeguarding women's freedom of choice to make their own reproductive health decisions.

The **network-building** initiative comprises those activities that will lead to the development and implementation of a dynamic membership structure, as well as our work with colleague organizations from around the world. This structure will unify and engage both Action Centers and individual physician-advocates. GDC will collaborate with other stakeholders, including legal groups, NGOs, women's rights organizations, nurses, midwives and pharmacists, to engage in multi-faceted advocacy efforts and to strengthen the network of professionals working together for reproductive health. The GDC network will facilitate increased exchange and support among physicians around the world to enable them to contribute to positive change in reproductive health law, policy and practices, and to work towards ensuring that women have access to the information and services they need. Our collaboration and partnership with others contributes to a diverse and interconnected movement working together for reproductive health and justice.

The fourth strategic initiative is the **management and support** component, which will sustain the ongoing operations and growth of GDC. These activities will lead to efficient operations, and to an increase in funding and resources that can be used in service of GDC's mission. GDC aims to be a well-managed, sustainable organization that implements its activities and reporting on time and within budget. Our functioning will be reinforced by robust internal systems and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism used for continuous quality improvement. GDC will increasingly function as a "virtual" organization through improved information management and use of state-of-the-art technology.

#### **Implementation:**

This Strategic Plan aspires to be GDC's compass for the coming few years, guiding the organization's ambitions and growth. Progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan will be assessed during the annual planning cycle. The Coordinating Team and Board of Managers will monitor progress against each of the four strategic initiatives. We plan for a review of the half-way point of the next five years, during which the strategic initiatives and outputs will be evaluated. Additional actions may be defined wherever necessary to adapt to changes in GDC's context and new challenges.

**Goal:** To improve reproductive health outcomes and enhance women's autonomy to control their

**Purpose:** Provide a platform that promotes and facilitates exchange, support and collaboration among physicians from diverse medical disciplines and from around the world. This enables them to be effective advocates for comprehensive reproductive health

**Strategic Initiatives & Objectives**

**Outputs**

**1. Training**

**Objective:** Transform individual physicians into an influential group of advocates for reproductive health and rights

- 1.1 Organize and facilitate advocacy and related content training for physicians and other health care providers
- 1.2 Revise and update training curriculum on reproductive health advocacy; expand training components (eg. basic, advanced, legal, media training)
- 1.3 Organize a refresher Training of Trainers
- 1.4 Develop a post training package for follow up with trainees
- 1.5 Develop online training curriculum

**2. Advocacy**

**Objective:** Increase our efforts to advocate for more progressive reproductive health laws, policies and regulations

- 2.1 Public positioning by producing position papers and by making statements against violations of reproductive rights, political incursions on the duties of physicians to provide medical care and support, and harmful healthcare policies and practices
- 2.2 Facilitate the Rapid Response Team (RRT) to respond immediately against violations of reproductive rights and political intrusions on the doctor-patient relationship
- 2.3 Conduct and support original research as needed to support advocacy
- 2.4 Initiate and support in-country advocacy campaigns to enhance access to reproductive health care
- 2.5 Develop and promote strategies to address conscientious objection and the interpretation of the health exception for abortion, and expand the number of priority topics

**3. Network building**

**Objective:** Establish a global network of pro-choice physicians committed to reproductive health

- 3.1 Engage in international and national policy discourse by convening meetings and participating in international conferences and other relevant forums
- 3.2 Organize the membership structure to facilitate sharing of advocacy strategies and resources
- 3.3 Strengthen the membership in Action Centers countries and expand in other parts of the world to enhance global presence
- 3.4 Collaborate and partner with other stakeholders to strengthen the network and engage in advocacy efforts, possibly integrating activities
- 3.5 Engage the next generation of abortion providers and advocates

**4. Management and Support**

**Objective:** Ensure a strong operational platform to facilitate sustainable growth, increased

- 4.1 Triple our revenue and manage donor/prospect relations to ensure a sustainable and diverse funding base
- 4.2 Formalize the GDC structure to facilitate future growth and increased independence
- 4.3 Strengthen the five Action Centers and explore regionalization in Latin America and Africa
- 4.4 Establish annual work plans and budgets, and set up internal systems/policies/practices to work across borders
- 4.5 Increase staffing capacity of the Coordinating Team and Action Centers
- 4.6 Develop M&E approach and mechanisms