

Year In Review:

2019 Pro-Choice Victories

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Abortion Rights
Coalition of Canada

Coalition pour le droit à
l'avortement au Canada

This timeline tallies pro-choice victories in the year 2019. It includes political and social successes, favourable court rulings and Ad Standards decisions, and anti-choice losses. Thank you to everyone who contributes to the daily fight for abortion rights and access!

January

- ❖ 22nd: An Alberta judge banned the extremist anti-choice group Canadian Centre for Bio-ethical Reform from protesting inside the Calgary airport.

March

- ❖ 19th: The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics and Humanist Canada launched the Dr. Henry Morgentaler Memorial Scholarship. This \$1000 scholarship will help physicians train to provide abortion services in Canada.

April

- ❖ 4th: Anti-choice ads were removed from Grand River Transit buses in Waterloo. The ads falsely claimed that abortion is linked to suicide, substance abuse, breast cancer, depression, and infertility.
- ❖ 8th: The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) in Halifax published a guide to abortion access in Nova Scotia: "Access to Choice".
- ❖ 8th: Calgary's City Council passed a motion to explore whether Calgary has the power to set up safe zones to keep protesters with graphic materials away from children at schools.
- ❖ 16th: Health Canada approved updates for the prescribing of Mifegymiso, the abortion pill. Ultrasounds are no longer required.
- ❖ 29th: Clinic 554 in Fredericton New Brunswick won the 2019 Peter Gillespie Social Justice Award for its care and dedication to marginalised communities.

May

- ❖ 15th: The Court of Appeal for Ontario ruled that doctors who object to providing care for religious or personal reasons must offer patients an "effective referral" for services they oppose.
- ❖ 22nd: The City of Nelson, BC, ended the courtesy banner programme due to a "Right to Life" banner that violated Charter rights. (A qualified win because human rights groups such Kootenay Pride will not be able to fly their flag.)
- ❖ 24th: The Thames Valley District school board nixed a religious group's anti-sex and anti-abortion talk at an elementary school in London, Ontario, after a backlash from parents.

June

- ❖ 1st: Manitoba announced that it would provide full coverage for the abortion pill Mifegymiso.
- ❖ 4th: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau increased funding for global women's health to \$1.4 billion annually for 10 years, making the announcement at the global Women Deliver conference held in Vancouver. The funding will cover sexual and reproductive health, including safe abortion.
- ❖ 5th: The Northwest Territories began fully covering the cost of Mifegymiso for everyone.

- ❖ 7th: Saskatchewan announced full coverage of Mifegymiso, the last province to do so. All provinces and territories now fully fund the abortion pill except Nunavut, which funds it for about 90% of residents.
- ❖ 13th: An anti-choice billboard was taken down in Kelowna because Ad Standards said it was inaccurate and demeaning to women by implying they can have abortions up to the 9th month of pregnancy.
- ❖ 19th: The SHORE Centre in Kitchener launched the national app “Choice Connect” to help folks find an abortion provider in their area based on their individual needs.
- ❖ 19th: Globe and Mail journalist Carly Weeks received the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada’s Journalism Award for Excellence in Women’s Health reporting. In particular, she was awarded for her coverage about Mifegymiso coverage in Canada.

July

- ❖ Numerous Canadians protested and boycotted Cineplex and Landmark Cinemas in response to their showing of the anti-choice film Unplanned. Widespread media coverage exposed the film as false and harmful propaganda.

August

- ❖ 21st: Ontario’s new sex education curriculum was released, and it retained most elements of the previous Liberal government curriculum that had been repealed by Doug Ford in response to right-wing protests, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and consent.

September

- ❖ 19th: ARCC launched a federal election toolkit, including voting guides, questions for candidates, and much more. (We are grateful to UNIFOR for their donation to help us produce this valuable resource.)

October

- ❖ 10th: Although Clinic 554 in Fredericton announced its impending closure on this day, it resulted in significant national media attention and forced party leaders to take a stand during the election campaign. Green Party leader Elizabeth May attended an Oct 11 Fredericton rally to support the clinic, Jagmeet Singh promised to save the clinic, and Justin Trudeau promised to meet with the Premier. On Oct 24th, Horizon Health threw its support behind Clinic 554.
- ❖ 21st: The Conservative Party led by Andrew Scheer lost the federal election. Subsequent media narrative blamed Scheer’s inability to clarify that his right-wing views on abortion and LGBTQI2S+ issues would not affect his government’s agenda.

November

- ❖ 15th: The 2019 Helen and Fred Bentley awards for Excellence were awarded to SHORE Centre, a sexual health centre in Kitchener (first place); and Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador (second place).
- ❖ 23rd: Bill 207, Alberta’s regressive “conscience rights” bill that would guarantee complete immunity for physicians who refuse to provide care for personal reasons, was voted down by the committee in charge of private member’s business. (Alberta’s Parliament will still vote on it.)
- ❖ 23rd: Pro-choice group Rocks for Kocs began placing pro-choice rocks on an “unborn” memorial stone in St. James Cemetery in Belleville, Ontario, continuing into 2020.

December

- ❖ 1st: Nova Scotia pharmacists were granted the go-ahead to prescribe birth control.
- ❖ 17th: The NDP in Nova Scotia announced it will introduce legislation to establish a safe access zone to prevent harassment of people seeking abortion services at the Women’s Choice Clinic in Halifax.