

What is a Fake Clinic?

They advertise as so-called “Crisis Pregnancy Centers” or “Pregnancy Resource Centers” on your campus or in your community. They pose as legitimate health centers and offer “free” pregnancy tests. In reality, most crisis pregnancy centers (CPC’s) are not medical facilities at all.

Some fake clinics coerce and intimidate women out of considering abortion as an option, and prevent women from receiving neutral and comprehensive medical advice. They are typically run by anti-abortion volunteers who are not licensed medical professionals.

Often listed in the Yellow pages under the headings “Pregnancy,” “Medical,” “Abortion,” and “Clinics,” fake clinics use deceptive names and locate just steps away from a Planned Parenthood or other legitimate women’s health care facilities in order to confuse women.

Fake clinics target college students by locating near campuses and advertising heavily on campus through informational kiosks, posters, campus newspapers, billboards, buses, and weeklies. They urge Campus Health Centers to refer students seeking information on abortion to them. According to a 2008 survey by the Feminist Majority Foundation, 48% of responding Campus Health Centers refer students to fake clinics.

Today there are an estimated 2,593 CPCs nationwide. Most fake clinics are affiliated with one or more national umbrella organizations. Two of the largest networks are Heartbeat International describing itself as “pro-life” and providing alternatives to abortion, and Care Net, “a Christian ministry assisting and promoting the evangelistic, pro-life work” affiliated with the fundamentalist Christian Action Council.

Have you seen these popular CPC advertisements?

“Pregnant? Need Help? You Have Options!” “Pregnant? Scared? We Can Help! Call 1-800-XXX-XXXX” “Free Pregnancy Tests!”

The Deception

A Congressional investigation of CPCs receiving funding through President Bush’s faith-based Compassion Capital Fund revealed that 87% provided false or misleading information about the health effects of abortion. The Congressional report found many of these federally funded centers grossly misrepresent the medical risks of abortion by telling women that having an abortion could increase the risk of breast cancer, result in sterility, and lead to suicide and “post-abortion stress disorder.”¹ Abortion is not associated with an increase in breast cancer risk or infertility, and a longitudinal study of 13,000 women over 11 years found that women who give birth have the exact same rate of need for psychological treatment as women who have abortions.

1. The Special Investigations Division of the United States House of Representatives’ Committee on Government Reform evaluated the scientific accuracy of information provided by federally funded “crisis pregnancy centers” in their report, False and Misleading Health Information Provided by Federally Funded Pregnancy Resource Centers.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. The American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association do not recognize “Post-Abortion Syndrome.”

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