



FEMINIST MAJORITY FOUNDATION

# CHOICES CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

WORLD'S LARGEST PRO-CHOICE STUDENT NETWORK

# CAMPAIGN TO EXPOSE FAKE CLINICS

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## WHAT ARE FAKE CLINICS?

“Crisis Pregnancy Centers” (CPCs) or Pregnancy Resource Centers advertise on your campus and in your community. They pose as comprehensive women’s health clinics and advertise under “abortion” and “family planning” services, but do not offer abortion services, contraception, or referrals. CPCs often provide false information about abortion, birth control, and the effectiveness of condoms for the prevention of STIs and HIV. Ultimately, their tactics delay or intimidate women from receiving comprehensive medical care.

Fake clinics target college students by locating their centers near campuses and advertising “free” pregnancy tests. According to a 2008 survey by the Feminist Majority Foundation, 48% of responding Campus Health Centers include CPCs on their referral lists for students facing unintended pregnancies.

It is estimated that 3,500 CPCs exist nationwide, outnumbering comprehensive women’s health clinics. Most are affiliated with national anti-choice organizations.

## THE DANGER

Many of these CPCs lie to women in need. A Congressional investigation of CPCs revealed that 87% provided false or misleading information about the health effects of abortion.<sup>1</sup> 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 syndrome.”<sup>2</sup>

A 2016 survey by the Feminist Majority Foundation also found that 21.7% of comprehensive clinics located near a CPC experienced one or more incidents of severe violence, compared to only 6.8% of clinics that are not near a CPC. Since 1982, the federal government has spent more than \$2 billion on dangerous, misleading, and ineffective abstinence-only programs.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there are 29 states with “Choose Life” license plates and fifteen of these states provide funding for so-called crisis pregnancy centers and anti-abortion groups. In addition, the Texas Health and Human Services

## 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!”**

Department awarded \$1.6 million in 2016 to an anti-abortion group that will dole out the state funds to CPCs.<sup>4</sup> And, in 2015 Vice-President Pence (then Governor of Indiana), authorized \$3.5 million in federal TANF funds to support crisis pregnancy centers in his home state.<sup>5</sup>

## ENDING THE DECEPTION

In 2009, Congress and former President Obama’s administration eliminated most – but not all – sources of federal funding for abstinence-only education and CPCs by requiring evidence-based, medically accurate prevention models. However, opponents inserted a clause into the Affordable Care Act of 2010 that created a \$50 million per year, five-year funding stream for Title V abstinence-only education programs, some of which are run by CPCs.

<sup>1</sup> United States Congress House Committee on Government Reform, Special Investigations Division. *False and Misleading Health Information Provided by Federally Funded Pregnancy Resource Centers*. 109th Cong., 2nd Sess., 2006. Washington: GPO, 2006, p. i.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 7 – 13.

<sup>3</sup> Dedicated Federal Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs Fact Sheet. SIECUS. [www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=663&documentFormatId=772&CFID=2123509&CFTOKEN=6b75edcc415114e4-7A67242B-1C23-C8EB-802EB97302576F72](http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=663&documentFormatId=772&CFID=2123509&CFTOKEN=6b75edcc415114e4-7A67242B-1C23-C8EB-802EB97302576F72). Accessed 16 March 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Grimes, Andrea. “Crisis Pregnancy Center Among Texas Repro Health Contractors.” *Texas Observer*. 2016. [www.texasobserver.org/heidi-group-crisis-pregnancy-center-contract-details/](http://www.texasobserver.org/heidi-group-crisis-pregnancy-center-contract-details/). Accessed 16 March 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Pandit, Eesha. “Support shams: Anti-abortion clinics masquerading as pregnancy support centers.” *Salon*. 2016. [www.salon.com/2016/09/15/support-shams-anti-abortion-clinics-masquerading-as-pregnancy-support-centers/](http://www.salon.com/2016/09/15/support-shams-anti-abortion-clinics-masquerading-as-pregnancy-support-centers/). Accessed 16 March 2017.



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In April 2015, Congress extended Title V abstinence-only funding stream through FY 2017 and increased the amount to \$75 million annually. In addition, a discretionary source of abstinence-only funding called “Sexual Risk Avoidance” was approved for \$10 million a year in 2016 and 2017.

Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney introduced the “Stop Deceptive Advertising for Women’s Services Act” (SDAWS) in the House in 2015; the Act would hold CPCs accountable for advertising abortion and family planning services they do not provide. Maloney has led the effort to pass legislation to regulate misleading advertising by CPCs for many years.

San Francisco and Oakland have also passed successful measures holding fake clinics accountable for deceptively advertising abortion and family planning services.

## HOW TO EXPOSE FAKE CLINICS: STEP BY STEP

### 1. KNOW THE FACTS

- Make sure your group studies up on fake clinics! Check out our online resources at [feministcampus.org](http://feministcampus.org).
- Contact your National Choices Campus Organizer. We can help you implement the campaign on your campus!
- Visit [www.optionline.org](http://www.optionline.org) or [www.lifecall.org](http://www.lifecall.org) to find out if a CPC exists near your campus. (Note: These are anti-choice websites with locations of CPCs and potentially triggering language or graphics.)
- If there is a CPC near your campus, your group can call or visit the CPC to see what they say about abortion and birth control. Do they offer abortion as an option for an unplanned pregnancy? Do they offer condoms, EC, and/or birth control? Does their website make false claims like, “abortion causes breast cancer, infertility, suicide, or post-abortion syndrome?”

### 2. KNOW YOUR CAMPUS

- Visit your Campus Health Center. Does your Health Center know about CPCs? Where would they refer a student facing an unintended pregnancy? Do they include CPCs on their referral lists?
- Does a CPC advertise on your campus? Check out your campus newspaper, billboards, cafeteria, and informational kiosks for “Worried? Pregnant? Call XXX-XXXX” ads or flyers.

### 3. STRATEGIES FOR TAKING ACTION

- Create educational flyers and posters identifying nearby comprehensive women’s health clinics and warning students about the fake clinics in your area. Start by looking at the sample posters available at [feministcampus.org](http://feministcampus.org)!
- Work to establish “Truth in Advertising” policies on your campus or its media and require your Campus Health Center to tell students that abortion and contraceptive services are not available at CPCs during referrals.
- Circulate petitions and get active locally to add your community to the growing list of cities which are demanding honesty from fake clinics. Contact [campusteam@feminist.org](mailto:campusteam@feminist.org) for more information.
- Educate activists in your community on the deception of CPCs and their connections to clinic violence. Share the FMF video “Expose Fake Clinics” [<http://bit.ly/cpcvideo>], or host a screening of the HBO film “12th & Delaware” [<http://itsh.bo/12andDE>].
- Stage a protest outside of your nearest fake clinic, warning people about the deceptive practices of crisis pregnancy centers. Record and photograph your demonstration – send it to us to post on YouTube and Facebook!
- Get involved with Feminist Campus’ Adopt-A-Clinic project to help keep abortion clinics in your community safe from harassment and violence.