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Couple file lawsuit after failed abortion attempt

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Published: Wednesday, February 20th, 2019 at 11:35pm

Updated: Wednesday, February 20th, 2019 at 11:37pm



The Planned Parenthood medical office in Albuquerque is where a woman from Idaho traveled to terminate her pregnancy in 2016. (Roberto E. Rosales/Albuquerque Journal)

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Using the last of their financial resources, an Idaho couple traveled more than

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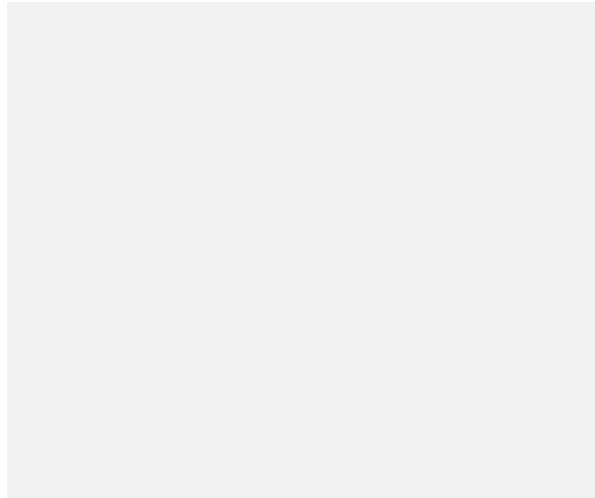
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700 miles to Albuquerque in February 2016 to terminate a pregnancy that they say they could not afford.

But the medication provided to induce the abortion ultimately failed, and unable to pay for a follow-up procedure, the two now want Planned Parenthood and others to shoulder the cost of raising “an additional unplanned child.”

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According to a lawsuit filed last week, Bianca Coons was about six weeks pregnant when she and her partner, Cristobal Ruiz, made the trip to avoid Idaho’s mandatory waiting period, which would “result in the baby being much more advanced in development.”

The family of four was “destitute and attempting to maintain and limit the size of their family.”

A medication abortion, also known as the abortion pill, uses two different medications to terminate a pregnancy in its early stages, according to Planned Parenthood’s website. The procedure causes an abortion in 94 to 98 out of 100 cases when a woman is eight or fewer weeks pregnant, according to the organization. The abortion medication can be used in the first 10 weeks of pregnancy.

The lawsuit says Coons took the first medication at the Planned Parenthood clinic on San Mateo and was given instructions to take the second later.

The family returned to Boise, and the next day, Coons went to an emergency room with severe nausea. She was treated for dehydration and learned that her baby was fine and had a strong heartbeat.

A doctor there contacted Planned Parenthood and was told that Coons should take the next round of medication, which her attorney, John McCall, said she did. McCall declined to comment further on the lawsuit.

Days later, Coons spoke with Planned Parenthood staff who told her she should take a blood test to determine whether the medication worked. During that conversation, according to the lawsuit, Coons said she would like to have a second medication abortion if she was still pregnant.

The staff member told her she could receive a second procedure free of charge if she returned to New Mexico or she could visit a clinic in Idaho where she would have to pay for additional procedures, the lawsuit says.

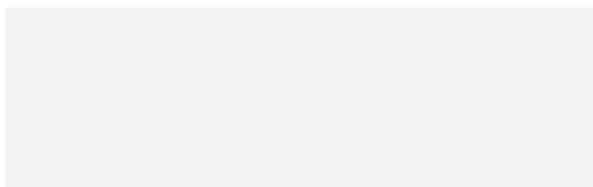
By early March, a still-pregnant Coons told a Planned Parenthood staff member that she could not afford “a second round of the abortion protocol.”

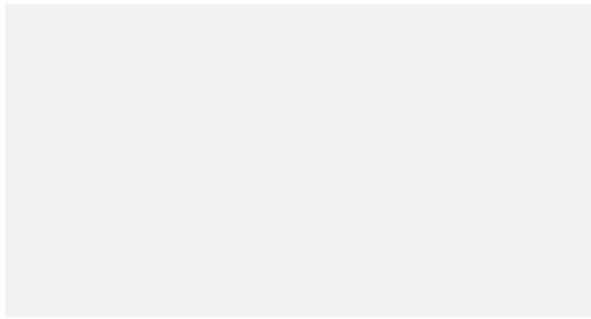
The lawsuit also says, “The fetus had now developed to somewhere around nine weeks. Ms. Coons could not morally sanction further action to terminate the fetus.”

Planned Parenthood then sent a letter to Coons warning that the medication she had taken can cause birth defects.

The couple’s son was born a month early “with jaundice and blood sugar issues.” And the family continues to worry that he “may carry a defect or injury into adulthood.”

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“The defendant’s failure to properly supervise and administer the abortion service directly resulted in the failure of the pregnancy termination which resulted in injury to plaintiffs’ interests in family planning and their interests in financial planning for the future of their family,” the lawsuit says.

In addition to \$765,000 in compensatory damages, the couple are seeking damages for breach of contract, unfair trade practices, violation of consumer protection laws and emotional distress, among other claims.

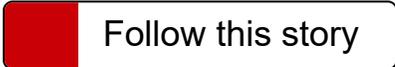
Named as defendants are two Planned Parenthood branches, the hospital in Boise where Coons sought treatment, and various medical personnel. It’s unclear where Ruiz and Coons live now.

The Planned Parenthood website says that in the “unlikely event that you are still pregnant” after the procedure, “you may need another dose of medication or to have an in-clinic abortion to end the pregnancy.”

In a statement, a spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood said she was unable to comment on pending litigation, and out of respect for patient privacy, she could not discuss specific patients.

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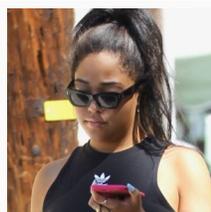
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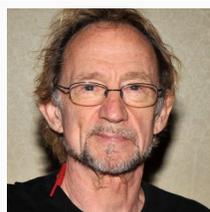
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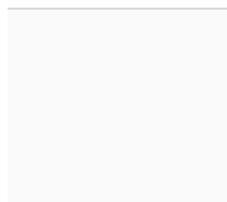
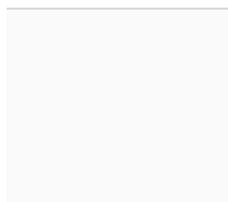
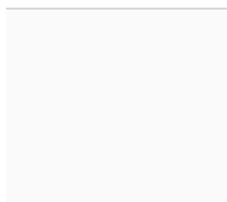
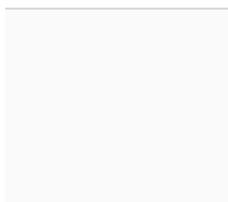
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