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Abortion foes protest against two

Right to Life publicizes Trenton disciplinary hearings

By LINDA A. JOHNSON
The Associated Press

TRENTON — Abortion opponents are painting themselves as the true advocates of women's rights, running campaigns encouraging malpractice suits against abortion providers and publicizing those accused of harming patients.

The New Jersey Right to Life Committee this fall notified media statewide before hearings by the state Board of Medical Examiners on the licenses of two abortion doctors. Both are accused of botching some abortions and harming patients.

"The intent of our being involved is to exercise our legal right to protest against doctors' incompetence," the group's spokesman, Marie Tasy, said yesterday. "The women's rights groups are nowhere to be found when women die from so-called safe and legal

abortion."
No deaths have been blamed on the New Jersey doctors — Harvey Brookman, with offices in Hamilton Township, Mercer County and Lower Makefield, Pa., and Steven Brigham, who runs clinics in Philadelphia and Voorhees and briefly filled in at the Pensacola, Fla., clinic where Dr. John Bayart Britton and his escort were killed by an abortion protester in July.

A six-member panel of the medical examiners board last month suspended Brookman's license for performing unnecessary and risky medical procedures; the full board will review the suspension at a Dec. 14 hearing.

The same day, Brigham faces a board hearing to show why his license should not be revoked. New York state recently revoked his

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Marie Tasy of Milktown The New Jersey Right to Life Committee

license, Brigham voluntarily surrendered his Pennsylvania license amid an investigation, and he faces licensing troubles in other states. In New Jersey, he is restricted to performing first-trimester abortions, after two late-pregnancy patients were hospitalized with injuries.

Tasy's group has picketed Brigham's Philadelphia office and attended previous license hearings for both doctors. Her group also is lobbying for a law requiring that abortion patients be told of the procedure's risks; about a dozen states have such "right-to-know" laws.

Representatives of local and national abortion rights groups say they would never support an incompetent abortion doctor, prefer to let medical experts determine if a doctor is incompetent. Local pro-choice groups have avoided taking a position on the two cases, although Bill Willis, coordinator for the Fairlaw-based New Jersey Clinic Defense Collective, said Brigham's case has been discussed.

"Certainly there are a lot of clinic defenders who would not to Brigham's [offices] to protect it from picketers, Willis said.

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Anderson said the use of scare tactics against abortion doctors "does create a climate where physicians with less expertise" can step in.

Meanwhile, several anti-abortion groups have been running generic newspaper and billboard ads telling women injured emotionally or physically by an abortion that they can sue without having to pay the attorney until a settlement is reached.

Life Dynamics Inc. in the Dallas suburb of Denton began a campaign two years ago to generate abortion malpractice lawsuits. "We'd like to see every woman in America protected against abortion," said President Mark Crutcher.

Bill Willis - NJ Clinic Defense
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