

# N.Y. suspends license of Jersey physician accused of botching abortions

By GUY STERLING

New York yesterday suspended the license of a South Jersey physician who last month was disciplined by New Jersey medical authorities after allegations that he botched abortions.

The suspension affects practices that Dr. Steven C. Brigham, 37, maintains in Spring Valley, N.Y., and New York City but has no immediate bearing on his New Jersey license, officials said.

Brigham, a 1986 graduate of Columbia University Medical School, has a practice in Voorhees, Camden County, they said.

Three days before Christmas, the New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners imposed restrictions on Brigham's medical and surgical practice, including an order that he not "initiate or participate in any second-trimester abortion procedures."

In addition, the group ordered that a board-approved supervisor

## Doctor practicing in Garden State under limits pending further action

make certain that Brigham complies with the restriction and that the supervisor review Brigham's records on a semi-monthly basis. The costs of the sanctions are to be incurred by Brigham.

The penalty will remain in effect

the state Division of Consumer Affairs. Brigham was charged in New York with improperly testing two elderly women and billing a number of patients at the Smoke Stop program in Manhattan for complete physicals that he did not perform. A hearing on the suspension is set for next week.

He was also accused of lacerating the uterus of a 20-year-old woman during an abortion at the American Medical Pavilion and AB Services of New York in Spring Valley. The woman vomited, bled profusely, lost con-

## abortions

sciousness and needed an emergency hysterectomy, New York officials said.

In addition, the doctor was charged with negligence in an abortion performed at the Flushing Gynecology Center in Queens.

A 17-page complaint against Brigham filed in New Jersey by a deputy attorney general in late November included additional accusations of improper abortion procedures. A hearing on the matter was held last month and was followed by announcement of the board's restrictions.

The state charged that Brigham "has had no formal training in obstetrics and gynecology and is neither board-eligible nor board-certified in any specialty." The physician began practicing medicine in the state in June 1992 and has been state licensed, the complaint said.

The state alleged that in October 1993, Brigham performed an abortion on a 14-year-old girl and barred her mother from the operating room because she could not pay "his \$50 surcharge" for allowing a family member to watch the procedure.

In addition, Brigham "directed that an excessive amount of sedation be administered to the patient" and "placed a handful of gauze in the child's mouth during this procedure," the complaint said.

The state also accused Brigham of performing abortions on women in the second trimesters of their pregnancies even though he was not authorized to do so, failing to refer patients for necessary medical followups, altering the records of patients, engaging in unsterile practices and publishing "deceptive and misleading" advertising.

In more than one count of the complaint, the state charged that Brigham's conduct, as alleged, "constitutes repeated acts of negligence, malpractice or incompetence" of a severe enough nature to warrant the suspension or revocation of his medical license.

Nonetheless, he remains practicing in the state, Sheppard said. New Jersey medical officials will be interested in the action taken by New York, she said.