

Doctor: Abortion protesters should adopt 'ugly black babies'

By Karen Garloch

kgarloch@charlotteobserver.com

Posted: Monday, Aug. 13, 2012

Dr. Ashutosh “Ron” Virmani, a Charlotte obstetrician-gynecologist who has for many years accused Presbyterian Hospital of racism for excluding him from practicing there, is now being accused of racism by anti-abortion protesters.

Members of Operation Save America, a Texas-based anti-abortion group, have posted online video of Virmani challenging protestors to “adopt one of those ugly black babies” and get them “off the taxpayers’ money.”

Virmani, 59, works for A Preferred Women’s Health Center in Charlotte, part of a chain of clinics in the Carolinas, Georgia, Virginia and Tennessee. The chain’s website says it is “committed to offering women and their families complete and confidential abortion care.”

In the [video](#), several members of Operation Save America, a fundamentalist Christian conservative organization, are seen confronting Virmani in a doorway. The date is given as July 26.

Virmani can be overheard telling the group not to put the cost of pregnancy and adoption on taxpayers.

One of the group members asks if he would rather profit from the babies, referring to performing abortions.

“No, no, I’m not profiting,” Virmani responds. “I, as a taxpayer, do not wish for those babies to be born and brought up and kill those people in Colorado.”

One of the protesters says: “If you tell us, we would adopt them.”

“Let me see you adopt one of those ugly black babies,” Virmani says. “Go ahead. Adopt these babies, OK? Take them off the taxpayers’ money.”

On Monday, a woman who answered the phone at A Preferred Women’s Health Center said Virmani was not available. “He has no comment,” she said.

Representatives of Operation Save America could not be reached for comment Monday morning.

Virmani has conducted a years-long e-mail and letter-writing campaign against Presbyterian Hospital, where he used to deliver babies. In 1995, a hospital peer review committee suspended

his hospital privileges after he made a mistake in surgery. He alleges he was punished more severely than other doctors because of his Asian-Indian background.

In the 1994 surgery, Virmani treated a patient at Presbyterian Hospital Matthews for pelvic pain after a hysterectomy. During a laparoscopic procedure, he accidentally pierced an important blood vessel that led to the leg. After the peer review committee suspended the doctor's clinical privileges, Virmani appealed, arguing that the artery puncture is a known possible complication of the procedure.

Presbyterian's board of trustees upheld the peer review decision, and Virmani sued. A state court ordered a new peer review, which had the same outcome. In 1999, Virmani sued again, unsuccessfully, in federal court, claiming that Presbyterian was more severe with him than with white doctors who made similar mistakes.

In the years since, Virmani, who has an active N.C. medical license, has written many letters to the hospital, other medical groups and journalists. He also compiled a series of booklets detailing his plight under such titles as "Once Upon a Time, I Delivered Beautiful Babies," "How The Hospital Destroyed My Life" and "Abuse of Medical Peer-Review."

Read more here: <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2012/08/13/3453138/doctor-abortion-protesters-should.html#storylink=cpy>