

State Inspections Uncover Violations at Local Abortion Facilities

Report on Friendship Family Planning: “a distinct sewage smell was present in the procedure room”

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Contact: Lynne Scherschel
lyndees@sbcglobal.net
219-306-0956

GARY, IND. – Lake County’s two abortion facilities, Friendship Family Planning in Gary, and Planned Parenthood in Merrillville, were recently inspected by the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH). Indiana state law requires the ISDH to inspect abortion facilities at least once every two years and produce a written survey of findings. Lake County Right to Life requested the surveys from the ISDH once they became publicly available.

Among the survey’s deficiencies for the Friendship Family Planning facility, operated by Dr. Ulrich Klopfer, at 3700 Broadway in Gary:

- Inspectors found a water leak on the patient care level in the basement. They observed 50 plus feet of black hose on the floor running from room to room connecting a sump pump to a drain hole. “This hose was leaking water in several different spots, one of which created a puddle on the tile floor that could not be avoided while entering from the hallway to the procedure room.” Observations also included “rust stains approximately 6 inches to 1 foot on the bottoms of the doors and/or walls.”
- Foul smells in the patient care lower level area including “a distinct sewage smell was present in the procedure room” and “a strong odor of mildew, mold, and stagnant water.”
- Failed to ensure state law requiring informed consent and 18-hour notification was being met in five of five patient records reviewed.
- Inspectors observed that the procedure room was in the lower level, accessible by only one staircase. The lower level has no windows, other form of egress or emergency lighting.
- Failed to ensure personnel met job description qualifications. Survey found a staff member helping with abortions had no relevant license or certification. Survey found staff doing lab tests lacked documentation showing that they were qualified for lab work. Additionally, staff members providing direct patient care lacked current CPR certification.
- Failed to have a registered nurse on staff as required. No registered nurse has been employed since Jan. 2014.
- “The facility failed to ensure a safe and healthful environment that minimizes infection exposure risk to patients, health care workers, and persons who accompany patients due to a water leak throughout the patient care lower level area of the facility toured.”

Friendship Family Planning was inspected on Dec. 9 and 10, 2014. The written survey of findings totaled 46 pages in length. There have been no abortions at this facility since Jul. 1 because of a state admitting privilege law, but the report explains patients were seen in the procedure and exam rooms in the three weeks leading up to the December inspection.

Planned Parenthood at 8645 Connecticut Street in Merrillville, Ind. was inspected on Nov. 19 and 20, 2014. The written survey of findings totaled 26 pages in length. The deficiencies listed in the survey included improper labelling of biohazard material, failure to document employees' immune status, and inaccurate or incomplete patient records on medical history, informed consent, hygiene instructions and vital signs.

The state provides a timeframe for abortion facilities to submit an acceptable plan of correction after an inspection shows the facility out of compliance.

"Abortion facilities must be held to a high medical standard, in order to protect the women walking through their doors," stated Lynne Scherschel, Vice President of Lake County Right to Life. "Dr. Klopfer's inspection shows a blatant disregard for the health and safety of local women. We're thankful that he is currently barred from doing abortions at this facility, but he continues to see women for appointments. I'm appalled that Dr. Klopfer subjects women to exams in a flooded and windowless basement that smells like sewage. I can't imagine any credible business, let alone a business that is supposed to care about women's health, operating in these conditions.

"Dr. Klopfer's egregious practices bring to mind the unsanitary and dangerous conditions found at the Kermit Gosnell abortion facility in Pennsylvania. When FBI agents raided Gosnell's facility in a 2010 drug investigation, they found cat feces, blood on the floor and a stench of urine. Reasonable people were outraged over the conditions at Gosnell's abortion facility and so too should reasonable people express outrage over the disgusting and unsafe conditions provided by Dr. Klopfer."

Surveys are available in their entirety: www.lakecortl.org

Lake County Right to Life, based in Highland, Ind., exists to protect life regardless of age, health or degree of dependency.

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