



Summit Medical Center of Birmingham, Alabama

Closed by the state in 2006

Original article found online at:

<http://realchoice.0catch.com/library/weekly/aa052106a.htm>

[Alabama Abortion Clinic Shuts Down :: Abortion :: ProLifeBlogs](#)

Summit Medical Center, the abortuary that has been killing children in Birmingham, Alabama for the past 24 years, has been shut down for good. ... The Alabama State Health Department walked into the doors of Summit Medical Center at 11:00am, Wednesday morning, May 17, 2006, and closed the doors of this horrific business forever. Two department officials entered the building and, in a few short minutes, all the clientele began to leave.

Imagine that! Yay! Now for the background:

In February, 2006, a young lady had come to Summit Medical Center for an abortion. A sonogram was administered by a non-physician (against Alabama State Law) and she was told she was 6 weeks pregnant. In reality she was 8 months along.

There's professional skill for you. Unable to distinguish between a 6-week pregnancy and an *eight month* pregnancy!

A non-physician gave the woman RU 486, again, in violation of Alabama law.

Six days later, the woman was rushed to the emergency room, where she gave birth to a dead baby weighing 6 lb. 4 oz. The Health Department was notified. Six weeks later, the health department shut Summit down.

Summit was, according to the 1991 Annual Report, a [National Abortion Federation](#) member facility. They're no longer listed as a member facility, but when the membership terminated or under what conditions I do not know. Summit is the facility where Malachy DeHenre performed the fatal abortion on [Leigh Ann Alford](#) in 2003. (Note that this wasn't enough to get the state to close the facility down, though the medical board did suspend DeHenre's license.)

With the closing of Summit, the number of abortion mills in Birmingham is down to one, from five in 1994. And lo! The streets of Birmingham aren't littered with coathanger-impaired women. Operation Rescue also reports that 22 former abortion workers became Christians during that period. Praise God! Dozens more left the business and sought wholesome, productive employment.

Further background on Summit:

Stacey W. alleged that she underwent an abortion by Dr. Ralph Robinson at Summit Medical Center in April of 1992. She suffered a perforated uterus, and her right ureter was

suctioned from her body. Yikes! Stacey was rushed to the hospital, where she underwent emergency surgery to remove the fetus and her damaged kidney. (*The Birmingham News* 10-15-92)

Maurine W. submitted to an abortion performed by [Ralph Robinson](#) at Summit Medical Center on December 10, 1982. Maurine faulted the clinic with lack of informed consent, failure to provide proper post-abortion care, and improper and negligent advise regarding her deteriorating condition. Maurine was been discharged after her abortion.

She called the clinic on December 14, and spoke to a woman who told her no nurse was available and diagnosed her feelings of morning sickness as a "neurotic reaction." On December 18 Maureen called again, again was told a nurse was not available. She reported cramping and morning sickness, and was told her symptoms were normal.

Maurine suffered sharp pains at 4 PM, after calling the clinic. She got up and fainted. She awoke cold and clammy, and tried to go for help but fainted again. A neighbor saw her and called an ambulance.

Maurine needed lifesaving surgery to address an [ectopic pregnancy that the clinic had failed to address](#).

In his defense, Robinson argued that Maureen "failed to produce even a scintilla of evidence that this defendant violated any standard of care." Robinson's operative report stated "product of conception was normal and the fetal age was 6 weeks," but the pathology report showed endometrium and chorionic villi only with no fetal parts.

Robinson contended in his deposition that the fetus was microscopic, although the normal length of [6 week embryo](#) is 22-24 mm (just under an inch). The post-operative report from Maurine's emergency surgery found "fetal tissue fairly well preserved" in the removed segment of fallopian tube. Robinson also contended that Maureen never called him to report her symptoms, although she did call the number she was instructed to call and the clinic failed to relay her symptoms to Robinson. (Jefferson County Circuit Court Case No. CV84 460; Alabama Supreme Court No. 85-1055)

Debra H. alleged that she underwent an abortion at Summit on October 14, 1981. She said that the staff's negligence caused her to suffer severe infection, resulting in debilitating pelvic sepsis and peritonitis. She required extended hospitalization and dangerous operative procedures to correct the problem, and was left with permanent injury. (Jefferson County Circuit Court Civil Action No. CV83-1237)

For more on the closing of Summit, see:

- [Suspended Abortion Center Gave RU 486 to Woman With Late-Term Pregnancy](#) - This coverage says that "the woman was in a tenuous medical condition" and that Summit staff gave her the abortion drugs "to try to hide [their] actions."

Regarding the closure, state health officer Dr. Donald Wilson said, "That's not something we do very often. The incident involved multiple and serious violations of the rules. There was no other means to address it except an emergency suspension."

LifeNews.com said that they obtained a copy of the suspension order, which said that the woman had a "critical and dangerously high" blood pressure of 182/129. Instead of instructing the woman to seek care for this problem, clinic staff dispensed abortion drugs.

Summit's license was been suspended for 90 days, and a hearing was scheduled to determine if the license would be revoked.

Dr. Wilson added, "This is the first time I've ever ordered an emergency suspension for an abortion clinic."

LifeNews.com says that Summit Medical Centers operates seven abortion facilities in five states, including one in Montgomery, Alabama, which employed Malachy Dehenre, who lost his medical license in both Alabama and Mississippi because of botched abortions.

- **[Abortion Business Has License Suspended in Botched Abortion Drug Case](#)** -

This coverage indicates that the baby the woman delivered was "macerated", which means it had died in-utero and had begun to decompose. The article quotes the health department document: "Though Patient A was not seen by a physician at Summit, the facility's records inaccurately reflect that a physician, who was not present at the facility on that date, performed the ultrasound and provided the medical abortion."

- **[Clinic's closing renews debate](#)** -

This article indicates that the woman whose care led to the closing of the clinic arrived at the emergency room with the head of her dead baby protruding.

This article also tells of the experience of Jennifer Vickery, age 26. When Jennifer learned of the woman who had delivered the dead baby, "I was scared for my life. I was at a loss for words. It was crazy."

At the time, Jennifer was running a fever after complications of a surgical abortion she'd undergone at Summit on May 4. She had a follow-up appointment scheduled. Should she keep it? But the clinic was shut down.

Jennifer said that she'd been rushed into the abortion. An ultrasound had been performed, and she was told she was 8 weeks pregnant. "They rushed me back so quick and started giving me medication, and I didn't have time to think about it. I didn't feel like I had time to think about nothing. When I got there, they had me start filling out papers. They said, 'We want you to do it today, because we have a doctor here.'"

The article said that three other women, identifying themselves as Summit patients, contacted the paper saying that they'd had complications after recent abortions. One said that she'd undergone an abortion on May 11, and was there the day the clinic was closed, seeking care for extreme pain and a fever of 103. She drove instead to Beacon Women's Center in Montgomery Alabama, and was rushed into surgery. (State officials allowed Summit to remain open long enough to refer patients elsewhere, which is good for those who needed follow-up but tragic for those still thinking they needed abortions.)

The *News* said that they contacted a woman at Beacon, an administrator who would only identify herself as "Pat", who said she was "in shock" over the closing of the affiliated clinic.

This article also said that Dr. Williamson, the state health officer, said the health department puts more resources into inspecting nursing homes than abortion clinics. "Would we like to do it more frequently? Absolutely," he said. "But the nursing homes get more inspection because those are federally funded surveys. We have to figure out how to do the clinic inspections with state dollars."

The article also notes that two other Birmingham facilities had been inspected. New Woman All Women Health Care had been cited in 2004 for allowing non-licensed staff to do counseling, and for failing to meet administrative requirements. Summit had been cited in 2005 because Dr. Deborah Levich, the medical director, didn't have a controlled-substance permit. Both facilities, the article said, corrected these deficiencies.

Interesting point. The article said, "The National Abortion Federation, a trade association that represents Summit and other clinics, referred all requests for comment to Summit and its attorney." So - is Summit affiliated with NAF? Is NAF trying to distance itself? Whatup with that?

- **Alabama women's clinic probed for late-term abortions, violations** -

This article indicates that actions were also taken against the clinic's doctor, Deborah Lyn Levich, and nurse Janet F. Onthank King who apparently administered the abortion drugs to the woman who was 8 months pregnant. The disciplinary action appears to only cover the two of them working together. The Alabama Attorney General is also going to launch an investigation.

The AP report also noted that the nurse practitioner gave RU-486 to three other patients without the doctor being present, and without having the ultrasounds reviewed by a doctor. Five women had second trimester abortions without the doctor noting any attempts to determine fetal viability. One of the women was 19 weeks pregnant, and another was 21 weeks pregnant. Dr. Levich signed medical records for procedures done when she wasn't present.