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http://www.nj.com/healthfit/index.ssf/2015/04/former_nj_abortion_doctor_appeals_his_license_revo.html

Former N.J. abortion doctor appeals his license revocation, divests from clinics



A file photo of one of Steven Brigham's abortion clinics in Elizabeth before he divested his ownership. Brigham is appealing his license revocation. (Jennifer Brown/The Star-Ledger) *(Jennifer Brown/The Star-Ledger)*

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on April 02, 2015 at 4:25 PM, updated April 02, 2015 at 7:01 PM

TRENTON — Steven Brigham, whose questionable practice of beginning late term abortions in New Jersey and finishing them in Maryland led to the revocation of his medical license last fall, is pursuing an appeal, according to his lawyer and court records.

The state Board of Medical Examiners [took away Brigham's license in October](#), and in November ordered him to pay \$560,000 in court fees and fines. Without his license, Brigham was required by state law to divest himself from the American Women's Services clinics he owned in Elizabeth, Mount Laurel, Paramus, Phillipsburg, Toms River, Woodbridge and Voorhees.

Brigham's attorney Joseph Gorrell of Roseland said his client late last year submitted a letter on Brigham's behalf confirming he had sold his interest in the clinics. Vikram H. Kaji, an obstetrician and gynecologist and the medical director for American Women's Services has assumed ownership, according to the state Health Department.

Brigham filed an appeal on Dec. 24, 2014; a fall trial in the appellate division is anticipated, Gorrell said.

"Dr. Brigham believes a great injustice has been done and he is attempting to remedy that injustice," Gorrell said earlier this week.

Gorrell has described his client as [a devoted physician who felt compelled to fill the void for late-term abortion services](#) after George Tiller, a family doctor in Kansas, was shot to death in May 2009. Tiller had been the only physician east of Colorado willing to perform late-term abortions in the country.

[The board suspended Brigham's license in 2010](#) after the Attorney General's Office argued he used the two-state process to evade New Jersey's requirement that terminating pregnancies must take place in a hospital or licensed health care facility after 14 weeks. Brigham did not have hospital privileges at the time and is not an obstetrician or a gynecologist.

The board found Brigham commenced late-term abortions for five women in his South Jersey office by administering drugs that would begin "fetal demise" and contractions. The patients were ordered to drive to his clinic in Maryland the next day where the dead fetus was removed. Brigham did not have a Maryland license, but he told the board he believed he thought he was following the law because he was serving only as a consultant to a Maryland-license, board-certified OB/GYN, which is allowable under Maryland law. Brigham also testified he had sought legal advice in Maryland before he began using the two-state procedure.

Deputy Attorney General Jeri Warhaftig called the two-state practice "a flim-flam" that took advantage of his patients' trust and put them at risk.

One of Brigham's patients, an 18-year-old woman who was 21 1/2-weeks pregnant, suffered a lacerated uterus and bowel at the clinic in Elkton, Maryland in a procedure performed by another physician but supervised by Brigham. She needed to be airlifted to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore for surgery.

Kaji, a board certified OB/GYN, has his own history with the physician disciplinary board, according to public records.

In May 2013, an investigation revealed "numerous alleged deficiencies and board violations" in his role as medical director. After admitting he had suffered a mild stroke affecting his memory and eyesight, the board required he undergo a "neuropsychological evaluation, and any other medical or diagnostic testing and monitoring which may be required to evaluate whether (his) continued practice may jeopardize the public's safety and welfare," according to the board's order.

Neal Buccino, a spokesman for the state Division of Consumer Affairs which oversees the board of medical examiners, declined to disclose the results of the evaluation. But Buccino said the board had not placed restrictions on Kaji's practice.

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