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N.J. Attorney General: Abortion doctor unlawfully owns clinics



One of Dr. Steven Brigham's abortion clinics in Woodbridge. Brigham lost his license last year by performing late-term abortion in violation of state rules, and then led patients to Maryland to finish the procedure. (JENNIFER BROWN /The Star-Ledger)



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on July 01, 2015 at 6:53 PM, updated July 02, 2015 at 8:44 AM

TRENTON — An abortion doctor who lost his license over late-term abortions is operating a string of clinics despite assuring the state that he had signed away the practice to his medical director, according to a complaint filed by the Attorney General's Office.

The allegations are contained in a June 16 complaint accusing Vikram H. Kaji, a 79-year-old obstetrician and gynecologist of fraud for claiming he had assumed ownership of American Women's Services' clinics after the Board of Medical Examiners [yanked Steven Brigham's license in October for gross negligence](#). Brigham has appealed the decision.

The board found that Brigham skirted state law by starting late-term abortions with five women by administering a drug that killed the fetus in his South Jersey office, and ordering them to drive to his Maryland clinic, where the surgical procedure was completed.

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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.

But when an investigator from the Division of Consumer Affairs performed an unannounced inspection at a clinic in Hamilton April 22, Kaji denied he was the owner. During a closed-door hearing of a committee of the board on May 5, Kaji "repeatedly testified under oath that he was not the owner," according to the complaint filed June 16 by Deputy Attorney General Bindi Merchant.

"He expressly testified that 'there is no other person around, (Brigham's) the only one who runs the show,'" according to the complaint obtained by NJ Advance Media.

Kaji's "ownership of American Healthcare Services is a sham transfer and thus constitutes the use or employment of dishonesty, deception, misrepresentation, false promise or false pretense," according to the complaint, which asked the board to suspend or revoke his medical license.

He "aided and abetted the unlicensed practice of medicine," according to the complaint.

Consumer Affairs spokesman Neal Buccino said he could not confirm or deny whether the investigation into Kaji has opened a new case against Brigham.

Brigham's attorney Joseph Gorrell could not be reached for comment. Kaji did not return a call to the Princeton Women's Services clinic in Hamilton.

Marie Tasy, executive director for New Jersey Right to Life, thanked the Attorney General's Office for "looking into this matter further, and is now taking action to stop these two disgraced doctors' and their schemes, which have harmed women in the state of New Jersey."

Tasy said she hopes the actions revealed in the attorney general's complaint "puts an end to Brigham's attempts to practice ever again."

"It's pretty frightening this man could get his license back. This is another piece of evidence that shows he continues to flout the law and engage in deceptive practices."

This is not the first time Kaji has been the target of an investigation.

In 1993, the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine revoked his license for a year after he admitted having sex with a patient in his office in Yardley, Pa. and inappropriately prescribing her steroids and tranquilizers. The patient had been a victim of childhood sexual abuse and was suffering from depression, according to the Pennsylvania order. Two other patients also accused him of sexual abuse but he denied the allegations.

New Jersey also suspended his license for a year over the offenses in Pennsylvania. The record of his New Jersey suspension is not on the state website that lists doctor disciplinary actions, however, because the law only requires online records to go back 10 years, according to the division of Consumer Affairs.

In 1996, Brigham hired Kaji, and in 2010 promoted him to medical director, according to the complaint.

In 2013, New Jersey's physician disciplinary board required Kaji undergo a neuropsychological examination because of "memory loss/impairment" issues. The evaluation found "mild cognitive impairment" but he was deemed fit to practice.

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