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Tulsa abortion clinic, doctor file suit over medication-abortion law, say it forces doctors to lie to patients

By Barbara Hoberock Tulsa World Sep 26, 2019



TOP ARTICLES OKLAHOMA CITY — A Tulsa abortion clinic filed a lawsuit Wednesday contesting a law it says requires doctors to give patients false information.

Sen. Bill 614, by Sen. Julie Daniels, R-Bartlesville, requires those who perform medication abortions using Mifepristone — also known as RU 486 — to tell the patient in writing that it may be possible to reverse the effects of the drug. The law is set to take effect Nov. 1.

Tulsa Women’s Reproductive Clinic and Dr. Alan Braid, the principal owner of the clinic, filed the suit Wednesday in Oklahoma County District Court.

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The clinic is among four that provide abortions in Oklahoma.

The suit alleges that the law is an unconstitutional intrusion on doctors' rights of free speech, adding that it will harm the profession and patients.

"The act forces physicians to tell their patients that medication abortion may be reversible, a claim wholly unsupported by reliable scientific evidence, contravening physicians' ethical and legal obligations as medical providers," the suit says.

The plaintiffs object to the mandate that doctors deliver false, misleading, nonmedical information with which they disagree, the suit says.

They also object to the requirement to refer their patients to a hotline and website that encourage patients to undergo experimental treatments that run counter to their best interests, according to the suit.

It asks the court to declare the law unconstitutional and void and stop its enforcement. It also seeks attorney fees.

"This law in no way requires a provider to lie," Daniels said. "There have been successful births from using this method — several hundred in fact. And medical science is improving all the time, advancing the possibility of increasing those numbers.

"All this requires is notice that women might have an opportunity to reverse the medication abortion, that it might happen, that it is possible. That is all that is required."

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She said the bill is proactive.

“We want to make sure Oklahoma women have this information,” Daniels said. “It in no way guarantees they will have a live birth. It just says it is a possibility.”

The suit says there is no credible evidence that an abortion using a combination of Mifepristone and Misoprostol can be reversed.

“Indeed, once an abortion has occurred, whether by medication or by any other means, a woman is no longer pregnant, which cannot be reversed,” the suit says.

The Center for Reproductive Rights is representing the plaintiffs.

Earlier this month, a federal court blocked a similar law in North Dakota, the center noted.

“Forcing doctors to lie to their patients violates their free speech and the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship,” said Nancy Northup, the center’s president and CEO. “There is no medical evidence to support so-called ‘abortion reversal,’ and it’s reckless to suggest otherwise. We cannot have patients making health care decisions based on false information.”

The Center for Reproductive Rights is currently challenging two other Oklahoma laws. One bans the standard abortion procedure after about 14 weeks of pregnancy. Another requires patients to wait 72 hours to access abortion.

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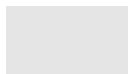
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