

BREAKING National group involved in efforts to identify teen girl found dead in alley

https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/illinois/abortion-doctor-probe-taken-over-by-indiana-authorities-fetal-remains/article_540315e1-1719-56fa-82b4-e94a15c2976c.html

BREAKING **FEATURED**

Abortion doctor probe taken over by Indiana authorities; 2,246 fetal remains shipping to Hoosier law enforcement

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Investigators remove boxes of evidence Thursday from a former family clinic at 37th Avenue and Broadway in Gary.

John J. Watkins, The Times

The 2,246 fetal remains found in several boxes in a deceased abortion doctor's garage will be shipped to Indiana as part of an ongoing police probe, investigators said Thursday.

The remains are believed to be from three Indiana clinics, including one in Gary, at which Dr. Ulrich Klopfer performed abortions before his death earlier this month, authorities have concluded.

Investigators could be seen removing boxes Thursday at the doctor's former Gary property at 37th and Broadway. An official at the scene said he could not comment on the investigation.

Hobart police Capt. James Gonzales said officers from his department also searched some storage units in Hobart that Klopfer previously used and also assisted with the search of the Gary clinic. No remains were found.

Also on Thursday, the Will County state's attorney, coroner and sheriff announced in Joliet, Illinois, the investigation, which was initiated by Illinois authorities, is being turned over to Indiana law enforcement.

"We are working with the Indiana attorney general's office, and arrangements are being made to transfer the fetal remains into their custody," Will County Sheriff Mike Kelley said. "Obviously he had three clinics in Indiana, involving three different counties, so there will be county prosecutors and the Indiana attorney general (involved). I know the Indiana Legislature has weighed in on this also. Someone told me that Vice President (Mike) Pence has called them about it."

The remains, discovered at Klopfer's home in unincorporated Will County near Crete on Sept. 12 by family members, were determined to be from 2000 to 2002, which coincides with the time in which Klopfer practiced in Indiana clinics, Kelley said. The remains were individually packaged, dated and placed in boxes among a host of the deceased doctor's other belongings, police said.

The Indiana clinics at which Klopfer formerly practiced include Friendship Family Planning in Gary and clinics in South Bend and Fort Wayne. The Gary clinic, which closed in May 2015, has been visited by authorities and will continue to be a part of the ongoing investigation, police confirmed Thursday.

“Because it coincides with the time he was performing abortions in Indiana, most of the evidence of anything that occurred is there, and we will remain in contact with them,” Kelley said.

Kelley said there’s no evidence the fetal remains were from any abortions performed in Illinois.

“We have concluded what we can do here in Illinois,” Kelley said.

Police don't know why Klopfer kept the thousands of remains in his garage, Kelley said. Investigations have shown that no further medical procedures were performed on the remains, he said.

Former patients of Klopfer are being asked to reach out to the Indiana attorney general’s office by contacting Chief Deputy Aaron Negangard at 812-584-5995 or anegangard@atg.in.gov.

Members of pro-life organizations gathered before the Thursday police announcement in Illinois, holding a vigil for the aborted infants at the Will County coroner’s office.

Authorities are handling the remains as evidence in the ongoing investigation. But Eric Scheidler, executive director of Pro Life Action League in Chicago, said he is concerned with what will happen after the investigation closes.

“We hope authorities will provide every aborted child a respectful burial,” he said. “We have a long history of burying aborted babies all over the country, and we want to be there for these children, whether it be standing beside them or being there to pray for them.”

Officials in Fort Wayne and South Bend also searched two former clinics operated by Klopfer, police said.

A spokeswoman for Fort Wayne police told The Journal Gazette that city police assisted the Indiana attorney general's office in obtaining a warrant for Thursday's search of the former clinic in that city.

Police spokeswoman Sofia Rosales-Scatena said she doesn't know what officers found there Thursday or what they were looking for.

In South Bend, St. Joseph County Prosecutor Ken Cotter said authorities found no fetal remains during a search of a shuttered South Bend abortion clinic once operated by Klopfer.

Cotter said during a news conference outside the building that boxes of medical records were found inside but that "based on what we have seen so far, there are no fetal remains here."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Recent arrests booked into Lake County Jail

Aaron Flax