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## Another Alabama Abortion Center Violates State Health, Safety Codes

 **STATE** STEVEN ERTELT NOV 30, 2006 | 9:00AM WASHINGTON, DC

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**by Steven Ertelt**  
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**Huntsville, AL (LifeNews.com)** — A fourth Alabama abortion facility has run afoul of state health and safety laws as state inspectors continue to investigate abortion businesses for possible violations. State officials found the Alabama Women's Center for Reproductive Alternatives in Huntsville violated 10 different health codes.

The state health department found the abortion center put women at risk by having those who called the facility experiencing medical problems after an abortion routed through to the abortion business administrator rather than a doctor.

Women who had serious bleeding or other complications following an abortion were not put in touch with a licensed physician.

Others were sent home early without allowing them any recovery time following the surgery.

The state health department also said the AWCRA abortion center routinely failed to document the gestational age of the unborn child prior to doing the abortion.

Rick Harris, director of the state health department's Bureau of Health Provider Standards, told the Huntsville Times newspaper that the abortion center also failed to keep proper records which "indicates a kind of sloppiness."

"It makes you wonder, what else are they failing to document?" Harris said. "It's not a sign of bad care, but it's an indicator."

Harris told the newspaper the abortion facility will probably not be disciplined because it is taking corrective actions to fix the problems.

Dalton Johnson, the man who runs the abortion business, told the Times that after hours calls from women with post-abortion problems are now routed to an answering service instead of his home phone number. He claimed the answering service can quickly put such women in touch with the abortion practitioner.

According to the newspaper, the recent inspection of the AWCRA center, conducted in October, was the first since April 2001.

Rev. James Henderson, a local pro-life advocate, told the newspaper that even though the state is increasing inspections on abortion centers because of the recent problems, he doesn't think that's enough.

He said the state should make abortion facilities close for 30 days if they find any problems and he says some abortion practitioners who do a small number of abortions are not required to be licensed by the state.

"But with the way the department's bureaucracy works and all the inertia in the system, I don't expect a whole lot to happen," he told the Huntsville paper. "I think they're afraid of the abortion industry. The whole thing is just messed up."

Last week, the Birmingham New Woman All Women Health Care

abortion facility agreed to go on probation over several violations found by state health inspectors including tests not being done on women before abortions and the abortion facility's administrator taking narcotics from the facility for her own personal use.

Some of the violations included patients who were not given medications on time, failing to verify if ultrasound or pregnancy tests had been conducted before abortions, and the administrator's personal use of the abortion center's drugs.

The administrator has since been fired and state health inspectors are monitoring the abortion facility's misuse of the drugs.

The center hadn't been inspected since July 2004 but State Health Officer Don Williamson said staffing increases have made it so he can begin doing annual inspections of the state's nine abortion centers.

Earlier this month, Diane Derzis, the director of the New Woman abortion facility, told AP, it had "nothing to hide" from state inspectors.

New Woman isn't the first abortion business to have health violations as two other Alabama abortion centers have come under fire.

The Summit Medical Center abortion center in Birmingham closed down in July after a nurse illegally gave a woman late in pregnancy the dangerous RU 486 abortion drug. Afterwards, it fabricated its health records in an attempt to cover up what happened.

The woman Summit gave the abortion drug to had a severely high blood pressure and needed medical attention, and later gave birth to a stillborn baby. According to the suspension order LifeNews.com obtained, the woman had a "critical and dangerously high" blood pressure reading of 182/129.

Only a doctor is supposed to dispense the dangerous abortion drug and the mifepristone pills are only intended to be used in the early stages of a pregnancy. The woman went to an emergency room six days later and gave birth to a 6-pound, 4-ounce stillborn baby.

The state medical board has also temporarily prohibited abortion practitioner Deborah Lyn Levich and Summit Medical Center

nurse Janet F. Onthank King from practicing.

Levich and King have been prohibited from working with each other again after Levich allowed King to dispense the abortion drug.

At Summit, state health officials said they found "egregious lapses in care, including non-physicians performing abortions, severely underestimating the gestational age of a fetus, failure to appropriately refer or treat a patient with a dangerously elevated blood pressure, and performing an abortion on a late-term pregnancy."

Summit Medical Centers operates seven abortion businesses in five states and has another abortion center in Montgomery, Alabama.

It is the abortion business that employed Malachy Dehenre, who lost his medical license in both Alabama and Mississippi because of botched abortions.

Following the incident at Summit, the state began inspecting the state's other abortion facilities, which led to finding problems at Reproductive Health Services in Montgomery.

The Alabama Department of Health suspended RHS's license in August saying that the abortion business did not have a backup physician on hand kept inadequate medical records and conducted poor follow-up abortion care.

State health officials postponed a September hearing on the suspension. Because the facility says it is working on making improvements, State Health Department attorney Pat Ivie said the agency decided to postpone a hearing.

Previously, the health department had set up a September 18 hearing on the suspension but Ivie told the Associated Press that the abortion center showed a plan for correcting the abuses.

Ivie indicated RHS must satisfy its requirements and sign a consent agreement to abide by the state health rules before it can reopen.

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