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DHH suspends license of Shreveport abortion clinic

Hope Medical Group for Women ordered to immediately cease operations

Friday, September 3, 2010 | **Contact:** Bureau of Media & Communications (225) 342-1463 or (225) 342-3816

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals today issued a notice of license revocation to Hope Medical Group for Women in Shreveport and ordered the clinic to immediately cease performing abortions after an investigation found violations that posed significant health and safety risks to clients. The immediate suspension of the facility's license came under legislation signed this year by Gov. Bobby Jindal that gives the Department authority to immediately suspend an abortion facility's license under certain circumstances.

Several violations were noted during a recent investigation of the facility, including the facility's failure to ensure that a physician performed and documented a physical exam on each patient prior to a procedure, failure to properly monitor vital signs of patients under anesthesia, failure to have proper procedures in place for administering anesthesia and failure to have properly trained professionals performing certain medical procedures related to the administering of anesthesia.

This is the first time DHH has issued an immediate suspension of an abortion facility's license under the new law.

"When we see this level of egregious conduct at a facility, it is incumbent on us to take steps necessary to protect our residents," said DHH Interim Secretary Anthony Keck. "The Legislature gave us this authority because they recognized we must have the ability to stop unsafe practices that place these already vulnerable women in danger."

Act 490 of the 2010 Louisiana Legislature, sponsored by State Rep. Fred Mills of St. Martinville, allows for the immediate suspension of an abortion facility's license if the DHH "secretary determines that the violation or violations pose an immediate threat to the health, welfare, or safety of a client or patient." Prior to Act 490, an abortion facility under licensure revocation would be allowed to continue performing abortions pending appeal of such revocation, which can take months.

"This law allows us to put the health and safety of our residents as the No. 1 priority," Keck said. "It would be unconscionable to allow practices known to put women in jeopardy to continue while appeals drag on."

Letters notifying the abortion facility of the revocation action and immediate suspension were faxed to the facility this afternoon.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>.

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STATEWIDE INITIATIVES...



CONTACT US...

Mailing Address: Department of Health & Hospitals | P. O. Box 629 | Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Physical Address: 628 N. 4th Street | Baton Rouge, LA 70802 | PHONE: 225.342.9500 | FAX: 225.342.5568

