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Gov't to send escorts to abortion clinics but who is really protecting women?

According to the NY Daily News: A new City Council-backed escort program to aid patients at heavily protested city abortion clinics will launch next month, Speaker Christine Quinn announced Friday.

The move to recruit and train escorts comes in response to growing protests by anti-abortion activists, officials said.

The Daily News reported that a Sunset Park, Brooklyn abortion clinic shut down last month after owners said protesters drove away patients and doctors. And a major anti-abortion vigil is planned Saturday at **Choices Women's Medical Center** in Jamaica, Queens.

Choices Womens Medical Center NOW open ...



Well... we all know the importance of protecting women from those pesky pro-lifers after all...it was a doctor once employed by "**Choices Abortion Clinic**" who did this:

When abortionist Alan Zarkin came looking for work, Merle Hoffman, owner of the Choices abortion clinic the state is now seeking to protect, could not have been happier. She and the doctor had worked together off and on for many years in her clinic, Choices Women's Medical Center in



Queens. Moreover, her medical director had just left, so she happily handed the title over to Dr. Zarkin.

Zarkin was convicted of carving his initials into the stomach of a patient on whom he

had just performed a Caesarean section. The patient, Dr. Liana Gedz, sued the hospital, the doctor and his former medical practice for \$5.5 million, charging that the incident has left her physically and emotionally scarred. Zarkin has since had his medical license temporarily suspended pending a final investigation, and he is also the subject of an inquiry by the Manhattan district attorney's office.

According to [New York State Board of Professional Medical Conduct order # BPMC 00-32](#), abortionist Alan Zarkin was ordered to surrender his medical license as he could not defend against at least one of ten charges of misconduct brought against him.

Here are a few of the charges listed by the Board:

In 1999, while working at Beth Israel Hospital in New York, abortionist Alan Zarkin performed a cesarean on a woman and when she asked if he had removed all the fat, Zarkin stated that he had and that he was "going to add it to his penis." Zarkin then went and **carved his initials, "AZ," into the woman's abdomen** because he claimed he did a good job in the surgery.

In 1996, while treating a patient at his office, Zarkin told the patient that she was special and that she was beautiful. He said that he talked about her to all of his friends. He then proceeded to call the patient at home and invited her to a wedding with him. During one of her annual visits with Zarkin, he told her he had received an eye lift and commented, "Between the eye job and the Viagra, I'm a sex stud. Can you believe that I did it three times in one night?"



Zarkin also commented about the woman's pubic hair and told her, "like your Mohawk."

The New York Times reported in the article, [How Doctor Got Work After Carving Into Patient \(01/27/00\)](#), that a patient who contacted them, who insisted that her name not be used, said that Zarkin made increasingly lewd remarks to her over three years, leading her to file a complaint with the state.

Besides making crass sex jokes, she said, Dr. Zarkin commented that she was "beautiful" and his "favorite patient." She filed a complaint with the Department of Health, she said, when the doctor told her he was taking Viagra three times per day and masturbating in the shower.



In February of 2000, the New York Department of Health closed the Choices Women's Medical Center abortion clinic where Zarkin worked detailing numerous health violations. Zarkin was brought on staff there by clinic

administrator, Merle Hoffman who claimed that she was unaware of Zarkin's checkered past.

The New York State Board for Professional Medical Conduct agreed with Zarkin that he could not successfully defend against at least one of the charges of gross negligence; negligence on more than one occasion; verbally or physically abusing a patient; conduct which evidences moral unfitness; practicing medicine while impaired and having a psychiatric condition which impairs his ability to practice medicine. On February 2, 2000 Zarkin surrendered his medical license.

Dr. Zarkin's predecessor at the Queens clinic **told** about a dozen clinic workers days before Dr. Zarkin started that he had heard of the carving incident, clinic employees and the former director said. But Ms. Hoffman said she did not know about the incident before hiring the pervert doc.

Hoffman, who trusted Dr. Zarkin, did not check with Beth Israel or Dr. Zarkin's former partners about why he had parted ways with them, she said. But not checking his credentials is a violation of state law, and her clinic, which provides abortions and other women's health services, and according to media reports, was investigated by the State Department of Health.

Hoffman described Zarkin this way: "He always presented himself as a physician who cared deeply about patients," she said. Hoffman eventually fired Zarkin.

Even before Dr. Zarkin came on board, Dr. Enayat Hakim Elahi, the departing medical director, told clinic employees that he had heard a rumor about the carving incident, Dr. Elahi and several clinic workers.

Dr. Elahi, **who has filed many complaints about conditions at Choices with the State Health Department**, even sent the agency a letter accusing Dr. Zarkin of botching a gynecological procedure under "extremely unsafe conditions."

Given the history of Choices and many other abortion clinics, it would seem that the government would have a greater interest in protecting those seeking the services of these clinics, rather than stifling the free speech of protesters outside.

Quinn a mayoral candidate next year and city officials said they hoped to fill 16 to 24 escort positions for each of eight Saturdays beginning Nov. 3.

They said no Council funds would be spent on the project.

Volunteers are being recruited via the city's Web site, <http://www.nyc.gov>, and through e-mails. They'll be trained by Planned Parenthood and the NYCLU at City Hall on Oct. 28 and 29.

Planned Parenthood already has a program of volunteer escorts to help women get past the protests. But officials said an expansion of the protests has led to the need for many more.

Troy Newman, president of Operation Rescue, a national anti-abortion organization, was startled when told that the government was intervening.

"Let me get this straight," he said. "You're telling me a legislator in the City Council is doing this?"

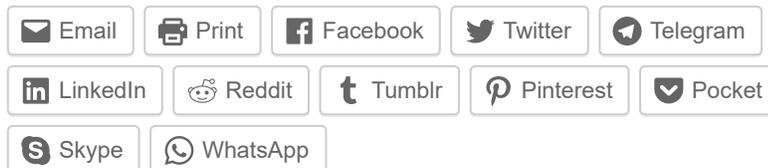
Once he got over the shock, Newman insisted his members are acting within their constitutional rights and said it should be the police that enforce the law, not the council.

"What she is calling for is vigilantism," he said of Quinn.

Quinn asserted that she isn't picking sides.

"We're allowing both sets of New Yorkers to access their legal rights," she said. "One side trampled the other's legal rights. That's wrong. We're not going to let that happen."

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