

2 Va. Doctors Indicted In Illegal Abortion Case

By Molly Moore

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Two Northern Virginia physicians were indicted yesterday on charges that each performed an illegal abortion at a Norfolk medical clinic. The clinic's owner, one of those indicted, has also been accused of performing abortion procedures on women who were not pregnant.

Dr. Chris Simopoulos, 47, of Woodbridge, who owns the Norfolk American Women's Clinic, and Dr. Parviz Modaber, 52, of Culpeper were each indicted by a Circuit Court grand jury in Norfolk on a charge of performing an abortion on a woman who was more than three months pregnant.

It is a felony in Virginia to perform abortions after the first trimester of pregnancy outside a licensed hospital or licensed outpatient surgical facility.

The Norfolk clinic, where the abortions were allegedly performed in January and June, does not have such a license, according to police. It was shut down in July after Simopoulos was charged in what authorities said was a scheme to perform abortion procedures on women who were not pregnant. As a result of those charges, the Virginia State Board of Medicine suspended Simopoulos' medical license.



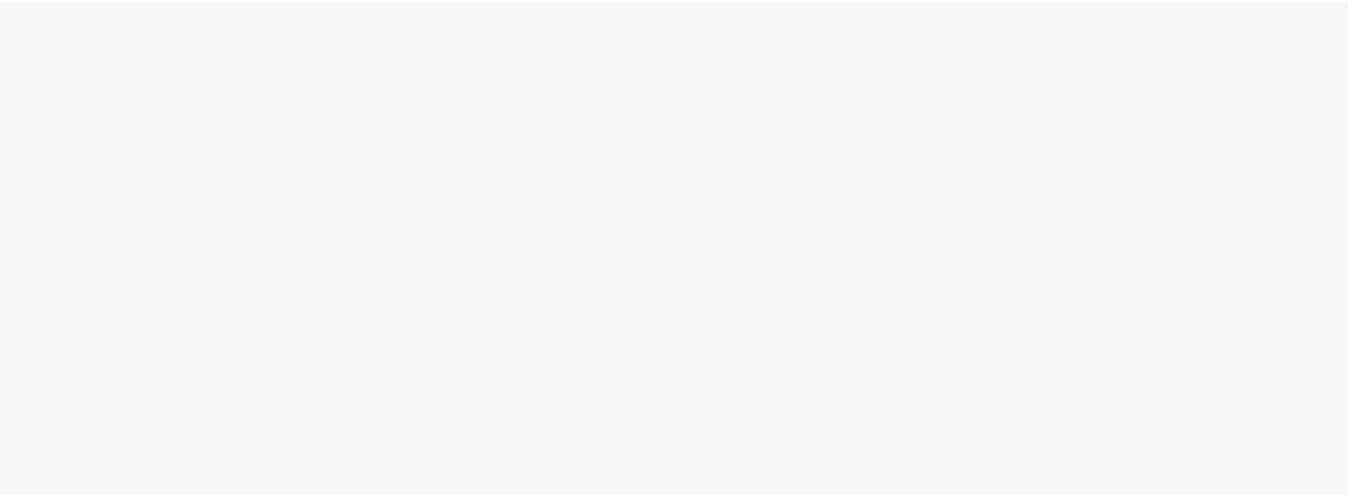
Simopoulos also owns clinics in Falls Church and Woodbridge.

Police said yesterday's indictment came after a three-month investigation that started before the clinic closed. The investigation is continuing, according to Capt. W.A. Williamson, head of the Norfolk Police Department's narcotics and vice squad.

Simopoulos was charged with performing an illegal abortion on a 28-year-old on Jan. 11, and Modaber, who worked at the clinic, was charged with performing such an abortion on a 15-year-old on June 30, said James O. Broccoletti, assistant commonwealth's attorney for Norfolk.

"Both patients were treated by other doctors, who reported their findings to police," Williamson said. Prosecutors said the two women were hospitalized because of serious infections and incomplete abortions.

Norfolk attorney Chris A. Christie, who represents Simopoulos, said his client will plead not guilty to the charge. Modaber could not be reached for comment.

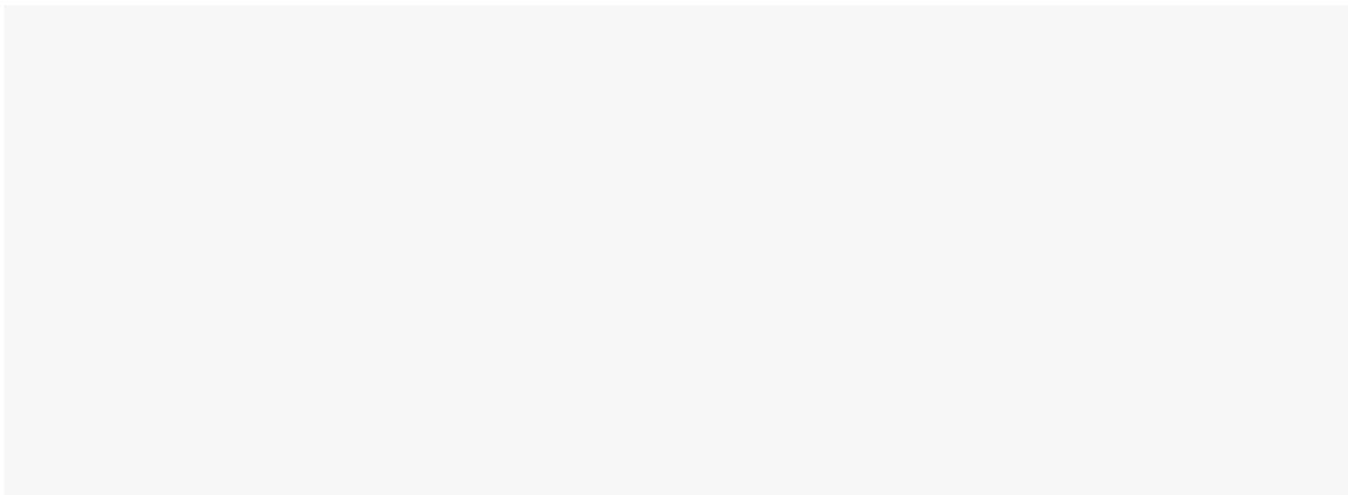


Simopoulos was convicted in Fairfax County five years ago of performing an illegal abortion on a Woodbridge teen-ager who was 5 1/2 months pregnant. He was given a two-year sentence, all but 20 days of which were suspended. His medical license was revoked for slightly more than a year by state authorities, but was restored on the condition that he perform no abortions for two years.

Simopoulos and Modaber could receive from 2- to 10-year prison terms if convicted of the illegal abortion charges. Both were being held late yesterday in the Norfolk city jail on \$50,000 bonds.

Simopoulos, who turned himself in to authorities yesterday on the advice of his attorney, was arrested in July at his Norfolk clinic while preparing to perform an operation on an undercover officer who investigators said had been told she was pregnant, police said. The officer was not pregnant, they said.

The investigation into allegations that abortions were being performed on women who were not pregnant was launched after an investigation by the Tidewater chapter of the National Organization for Women and the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot and The Ledger-Star.



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