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Abortion provider lied about insurance, N.J. prosecutors say

by [Marie McCullough, Inquirer Staff Writer](#), Posted: December 4, 2013



Three years ago, New Jersey regulators suspended abortion provider Steven Brigham's medical license for endangering and deceiving patients. During the suspension hearing, he testified that he was covered by medical malpractice insurance.

Now, as Brigham, 57, tries to regain his license, New Jersey prosecutors have submitted evidence that his sworn statement was yet another lie. They allege that not only did he stop carrying required liability insurance around 2006, but last month produced a phony insurance policy when forced to back up the statement.

The Bermuda-based company that purportedly issued his policy was itself a sham. It has not issued policies since 2006, when the company operator went to jail for insurance fraud and money laundering, according to legal papers filed Nov. 27 by New Jersey Deputy Attorney General Jeri L. Warhaftig.

"Brigham also produced a fraudulent receipt for payment for a policy issued by" the sham company, Warhaftig wrote.

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Brigham's attorney, Thomas Gorrell, did not respond to requests for comment.

The allegations are the latest twist in Brigham's 20-year, multistate history of trouble with regulators, the IRS, landlords, creditors, and law enforcement agencies.

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In the last few years, sanctions against him have forced his abortion business, American Women's Services, to shut down in Maryland and Pennsylvania. It still has clinics in New Jersey, Virginia, and Florida.

This month, a new Northeast Philadelphia clinic that did not disclose its ties to Brigham was ordered to close by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

In New Jersey, Brigham's efforts to regain his medical license have an air of déjà vu because the appeal process, the main charges, and even the lead prosecutor - Warhaftig - are the same as in the mid-1990s.

Now, as then, he is accused of trying to evade state safety regulations. He used his New Jersey clinics - which are not licensed to do abortions beyond 14 weeks - to initiate late-term abortions by inducing fetal death. The fetuses were later surgically extracted in a clinic in another state.

Now, as then, the scheme came to light when patients were seriously injured. And now, as then, Brigham has appealed his license suspension to an administrative law judge.

In the 1990s, his appeal succeeded. This time, a different judge must consider new factors, including evidence that Brigham was extracting the fetuses in Maryland, where he never had a medical license. Also, his Elkton clinic was a clandestine operation, unregistered and unknown to the state. The storefront facility had no sign and even patients were not told where it was until the day they drove there for surgery.

Last month, one of those patients - a New Jersey woman who was critically injured when her surgery went awry in Elkton - testified before the administrative judge that she had dropped her malpractice lawsuit against Brigham because her lawyer discovered he had no malpractice insurance.

That prompted Warhaftig to do more investigating, which led to submission of the amended charges against Brigham.

In addition to seeking the permanent revocation of his license, the complaint asks that he be ordered to pay the costs of the investigation and trial.

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