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Doctor faces criminal abortion charge

Bill Roberts

Dec 5, 2005



VALDOSTA -- Police took a warrant Tuesday for Dr. Charles Rossmann on a charge of criminal abortion, Valdosta Police Chief Frank Simons said. Police are yet to serve that warrant, however, as attempts to locate Rossmann were unsuccessful.

Rossmann appears to have abandoned his local medical practice, and the Georgia Medical Board suspended his license for allegedly attempting an illegal abortion.

The Board suspended Rossmann's license to practice medicine in Georgia citing that Rossmann's "continued practice as a physician poses a threat to the public health, safety and welfare and imperatively require emergency action ..."

All signage was removed from Rossmann's office at 2000 N. Patterson St., and a U-Haul moving van was parked in front of the building on Tuesday. Rossmann's office phone has also been disconnected. No forwarding information was available.

A Web site touting Rossmann's practice -- which a week ago contained pictures, narratives, phone numbers and lists of professional accreditations and achievements -- is now stripped of virtually all information.

Rossmann is under investigation by police and the medical board after a 30-week pregnant woman gave birth to a male child in Rossmann's office on May 9 while the doctor was not present and the

woman was alone in the office. Emergency medical personnel and police found the doors to Rossmann's office locked upon arrival and had to force entry into the building.

Third trimester abortions are heavily regulated in Georgia and are illegal unless there are health risks for the mother.

Simons said investigators are interviewing other patients of Rossmann's, and The Valdosta Daily Times received several calls from patients seeking contact information for the police.

The child was transported to Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Fla., where he remains in a critical care unit. The mother was treated and released from South Georgia Medical Center and is now staying in Sarasota, Fla., said Dan Becker, director of the Georgia Right to Life Political Action Committee.

Rossmann's office is not licensed for child birth by the state Department of Human Resources.

In the order suspending Rossmann's medical license, the state medical board stated that the mother requested an abortion and that Rossmann gave the mother "several pills." The order also reveals that Valdosta police seized prescription bottles from Rossmann's office which were labeled for his patients' use.

If convicted on a charge of criminal abortion, Rossmann could face up to 10 years in prison and a fine. He has practiced medicine in Valdosta since 1994. He has also practiced in South Dakota, Florida, Alabama and Indiana.

Another effort by The Valdosta Daily Times to obtain a copy of the original 911 call was stymied by Lowndes County on the grounds that the county has full discretion to determine whether a document contains private medical information. State law requires an agency to delete references that might identify the caller and release the remaining information, said Georgia Press Association Attorney David Hudson. The the county has refused to do that, claiming the entire document to be exempt for disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act.

To contact reporter Bill Roberts, please call 244-3400, ext. 245.

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