

# FORMER DOCTOR DID ABORTIONS, STATE CHARGES

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CHICAGO TRIBUNE

SEPTEMBER 14, 1989

**A** South Side abortionist whose license was revoked nearly a year ago for "gross malpractice" in the death of a patient was arrested Wednesday and charged with continuing to practice medicine, including performing abortion operations.

Arnold Bickham, whose record already includes a federal conviction for misuse of funds and an earlier license suspension, was arrested by state and Cook County officials after he tried to flee his Friendship Medical Center, 9133 S. Stony Island Ave., the state's attorney's office said.

An associate of Bickham's, Julian Banzon, 57, also was charged with practicing medicine and performing abortions without a license. Banzon was found hiding in a closet, the state's attorney's office said.

Banzon has never held a license to practice medicine in Illinois, officials of the state Department of Professional Regulation said.

During the midmorning raid, investigators also seized three handguns and an unspecified quantity of drugs described as those "typically kept by a physician."

The drugs were taken because the state's attorney's office said no licensed doctors were practicing at the clinic, which also operates under the name of Urgent Medical Care Ltd.

Last October, the regulation department revoked Bickham's medical license after an administrative law judge found him guilty of "gross malpractice" in the death of an 18-year-old woman who came to the clinic for an abortion Dec. 31, 1986.

The woman, Sylvia Moore, was forced to leave the clinic while she was still bleeding and in shock, according to testimony in Bickham's licensing case. Bickham called Moore "lazy" and pushed her out of the clinic in a wheelchair after she failed to get up on her own, according to the testimony. Moore later bled to death in Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, and the Cook County medical examiner's office classified her death as a homicide.

The license revocation was the second time Bickham had lost his license for wrongdoing. In 1979, the state suspended his license for 18 months after charging that he performed abortions on women who were not pregnant and sometimes not fully under anesthesia.

Also in 1979, Bickham was sentenced to two years in federal prison for defrauding the U.S. government of job-training funds for workers at his abortion clinic.

Five years earlier, Bickham had been the highest-paid doctor in the federal [Medicaid](#) program, with reimbursements of \$792,266.

If convicted of the most recent charges, Bickham faces another prison sentence. Practicing medicine without a license is a felony punishable by up to three years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000. Performing abortions without a doctor's license is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

Bond for Bickham and Banzon was to be set Wednesday in Night Bond Court.

Bickham's lawyer, Al Augustine, could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Ed McManus, a spokesman for the state's attorney's office, said it appeared that Bickham simply continued to practice medicine and to perform abortions at his clinic under his own name even though the state had revoked his license.

"He just held himself out as a doctor," McManus said.

The regulation department began investigating Bickham several months ago after receiving a tip, McManus said. Wednesday morning, investigators for the department and the state's attorney's office decided they had enough evidence to raid the clinic.

"We placed the clinic under surveillance early, and then we saw him come in," McManus said. "After a period of time, we entered."

After briefly trying to elude officials, Bickham turned himself over and was arrested, said Geri Miller, a spokeswoman for the regulation department.

McManus said investigators also removed medical records from the clinic.

Asked whether the clinic would remain open, McManus said: "It's closed for all practical purposes. We didn't specifically shut it down, but we arrested the people who were operating out of it."

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