

Modern Healthcare

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California hospital can continue elective abortion ban

Associated Press

An Orange County hospital where a ban on elective abortions provoked a state investigation can keep refusing to perform the procedure, it was reported Friday.

An Orange County hospital where a ban on [elective abortions](#) provoked a state investigation can keep refusing to perform the procedure, it was reported Friday.

Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian in Newport Beach reached an agreement with the state attorney general's office last month that permits it to continue the ban as long as it helps women access such services elsewhere, the Los Angeles Times [reported](#).

The deal also requires Hoag to continue providing all other reproductive health services through 2033.

The controversy was one of several that have played out across the country as Catholic and non-Catholic hospitals strike deals in a wave of healthcare industry mergers.

Hoag announced in the spring of 2013 that it would no longer provide elective abortions, as opposed to medically necessary procedures. The hospital said there was little demand, estimating that it performed fewer than 100 a year.

The decision followed an agreement from Hoag to affiliate with St. Joseph Health. The Times said interviews and documents later showed that the

move was a condition of Hoag's partnership with the [Catholic healthcare](#) provider.

The decision prompted spirited debate, criticism by women's health advocates and rallies by those on both sides of the abortion question. It also prompted a state investigation into whether Hoag had misrepresented the effects of its partnership with St. Joseph.

"We spent several months investigating those allegations and negotiating with Hoag," Special Assistant Attorney General Jill Habig said. "The agreement addresses the concerns that were raised and takes several affirmative steps to ensure women's access to reproductive health care."

The Newport Beach hospital is the 485-bed flagship for the nonprofit Hoag system, which includes two hospitals in Orange County, an orthopedic institute and several health clinics. Irvine-based St. Joseph Health has 14 acute-care hospitals in California and Texas.

Hoag's agreement with the state attorney general's office clarifies the "original conditions" of its affiliation with St. Joseph, hospital President and Chief Executive Robert Braithwaite said in a statement.

"We know our community will reap significant benefits from this affiliation," Braithwaite said.

Inline Play

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