

Support-SB 188/HB 452

Limited Services Pregnancy Center Disclaimer and Disclosure

SUMMARY

Registration of limited service pregnancy centers. Requires the Department of Health to promulgate regulations for the registration of limited service pregnancy centers that receive funding through the “Choose Life” license plate.

What are Limited Service Pregnancy Centers or Crisis Pregnancy Centers?

Limited service pregnancy centers or crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) are anti-choice organizations that pose as medical facilities to lure unsuspecting women to their facilities with offers of free pregnancy tests, all-options counseling, and short-term material assistance for pregnant women. However, CPCs do not offer or provide comprehensive birth control or abortion services/referrals and often use misinformation, intimidation, and fear tactics to dissuade women from using birth control or seeking abortion care. Most CPCs are run by non-medical personnel or volunteers and are NOT medical facilities.

Why Should the Commonwealth be Concerned?

Last year, the General Assembly passed the “Choose Life” license plate¹ which provides a state sanctioned funding stream to 38 CPCs in the Commonwealth. The CPCs that receive this funding use deceptive practices to deny women accurate information about the full range of options available to those who want to prevent pregnancy or are already facing an unintended pregnancy. At least 26 of these centers currently share medically inaccurate information with clientele.

How Does this Bill Protect Consumers and Public Health?

A report released by NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia reveals ample evidence that the majority of CPCs receiving license plate funding are misleading women with false information about pregnancy, birth control, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and abortion. Dissemination of erroneous information to women who believe they are in a legitimate medical facility not only put the individual at risk, but also her community at large. For example, telling young women that condoms have holes and don't work to protect against pregnancy and disease will result in greater numbers of unintended pregnancies and people infected with STIs. Pregnant or sexually active women need timely access to factual information and services- not diversions.

What does the Act Require of CPCs?

The Limited Services Pregnancy Center Disclaimer and Disclosure Act simply asks that CPCs sign a pre-certification with the Department of Health pledging to only counsel women in compliance with the current standard of care (i.e. American Medical Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists or Center for Disease Control). The Act also requires that a sign be placed on the door of entry into the CPC in English and Spanish that states the following:

1. The center is not a medical health care facility.
2. The center does not perform or refer for abortions.
3. The center does not provide or refer for birth control.
4. The center is not subjected to federal privacy laws as required of medical facilities (HIPAA).

Women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy deserve accurate and timely information. Delayed health care puts a woman at risk. Misinformation puts us all at risk. If crisis pregnancy centers are already providing medical information based on the current standard of care and are upfront about their services, then these requirements should not be objectionable. The health and safety of women should be the number one priority.

¹The Code of Virginia, Ch. 71, § [46.2-749.49:1](#) (2009)

