

Understanding Anti-Abortion Centers: Purpose, Activities, and Implications

Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

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December 7, 2023

Executive Summary:

This preliminary report delves into the practices of anti-abortion centers (AACs, also known as “crisis pregnancy centers”) in New Jersey, examining the ways they mislead individuals seeking reproductive health care and deter individuals from accessing abortion services. This report also highlights how many AACs, which are not licensed, regulated medical facilities, advertise testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), raising ethical and practical questions for communities and for public health.

To an average consumer who is not well-versed in their tactics, an anti-abortion center may be at first glance indistinguishable from a legitimate, licensed and regulated reproductive health care provider, like a Planned Parenthood health center. In New Jersey, there are roughly 59 brick-and-mortar anti-abortion centers – nearly three times the number of Planned Parenthood health centers. Two-thirds of New Jersey’s 21 Planned Parenthood health centers have an AAC operating within three miles of their location; half have an AAC within one mile. Many AACs also operate mobile units, bringing misinformation directly to the doorstep of licensed reproductive health care providers like Planned Parenthood. Due to their similar branding and marketing, an individual may inadvertently visit an AAC for care, and feel confused and angry when they are shamed and patronized by the individuals – who may be staff or volunteers – running the AAC.

Anti-abortion centers provide medically inaccurate information and use coercive, deceptive tactics aimed at pressuring individuals into carrying a pregnancy to term and deter individuals from seeking abortion care. As one example, AACs have a history of providing incorrect ultrasound dating, leading a client to believe they are earlier or later in their pregnancies than they actually are.¹ In recent years, AACs, including those in New Jersey, have also begun to promote a fraudulent and misleading intervention referred to as “abortion reversal;” the safety and efficacy of this intervention is not supported with any scientific evidence, and the California Attorney General has recently filed a lawsuit against AACs in that

¹ Cott, E., Tabrizy, N., Aufrichtig, A., Lieberman, R., & Morgan, N. (2022, June 23). They Searched Online for Abortion Clinics. They Found Anti-Abortion Centers. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/texas-abortion-human-coalition.html>

state for promoting this dangerous intervention.² The harmful practices of AACs can lead to mis-, under- and uninformed decisions, potential health risks to both the pregnant person and the fetus, and the infringement upon an individual's right to make autonomous, well-informed choices regarding their reproductive health – a right granted to those in New Jersey by the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act.

Anti-abortion centers also often lure visitors to their businesses with promises of medical services such as ultrasounds and STI testing, despite not being licensed, regulated health care facilities. This discrepancy means that AACs are not beholden to reporting requirements for STI test results, nor are their testing procedures regulated. This poses challenges in tracking and addressing STI trends and potentially undermines the overall public health efforts to prevent and manage STIs if AACs are improperly reporting STI data, or not reporting it at all. Perhaps most concerning are the additional hurdles patients needing STI treatment must endure after inadvertently and unknowingly seeking medical care from unlicensed volunteers in an unregulated non-medical storefront.

In a time when reproductive freedom is under attack in states across the country, with more than 20 states banning or restricting abortion access, this report underscores the urgent need to take a critical policy and regulatory eye towards anti-abortion centers to ensure that all individuals who seek reproductive health care services are able to receive accurate, unbiased information and are empowered to make decisions and access care aligned with their best interests. Addressing these critical challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach of increasing awareness and education, further investigation, and necessary reforms that protect reproductive rights, promote transparency in health care services, and safeguard public health at a time when STIs are on the rise. Fostering awareness, reinforcing regulatory accountability, verifying data, and championing transparency are pivotal steps in safeguarding reproductive rights, preserving individual autonomy, and upholding the accuracy of health care reporting. It is imperative for stakeholders to unite in championing these initiatives to cultivate a health care system that genuinely prioritizes patients and operates with accountability at its core.

² Attorney General Rob Bonta (2023, September 21). Attorney General Bonta Sues Anti-Abortion Group, Five California Crisis Pregnancy Centers for Misleading Patients. Retrieved from State of California website: <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-sues-anti-abortion-group-five-california-crisis-pregnancy>

I. Introduction to Anti-Abortion Centers

Anti-abortion centers (AACs) are organizations that oppose abortion and aim to dissuade people from obtaining abortion care. Often referred to as “crisis pregnancy centers” or CPCs, these organizations market themselves as a place where pregnant individuals may obtain support and information about their pregnancy decisions. Online and at brick-and-mortar locations, AACs often describe and market their facilities as similar to licensed and regulated reproductive health care facilities, where individuals are offered the full range of reproductive health care services. To an average consumer who is not well-versed in these tactics, an AAC may be at first glance indistinguishable from a legitimate, licensed and regulated reproductive health care provider, like a Planned Parenthood health center. In reality, AACs provide medically inaccurate information and use coercive, deceptive tactics to pressure individuals into carrying a pregnancy to term, regardless if the outcome is adoption or parenthood.³

Anti-abortion centers typically offer services like free pregnancy tests, counseling, and material assistance such as infant clothes and supplies to individuals who come to their facilities seeking information on pregnancy decisions. **In New Jersey, these facilities are *not* regulated health care facilities nor are they required to be staffed by licensed health care providers, despite often offering services such as ultrasounds and STI testing.** These centers are not subject to federal patient privacy laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). This regulatory status (or lack thereof) is due to the centers’ primary focus of dissuading people from receiving abortion care, rather than offering medical procedures.⁴

The operations and practices of anti-abortion centers have come under scrutiny due to concerns about the accuracy, completeness, and ethics of the resources they provide. Anti-abortion centers have been criticized for using misleading or medically inaccurate information, employing emotionally manipulative tactics, and failing to disclose their ideological stance to people seeking assistance.⁵ Some centers have been accused of presenting skewed

³ Reproductive Equity Now. (n.d.). About Anti-Abortion Centers. <https://reproequitynow.org/about-antiabortion-centers>

⁴ Adams, A., & Bergengruen, V. (2022, June 22). Anti-Abortion Centers’ Databases Could Be Weaponized Post-Roe. Retrieved from Time website: <https://time.com/6189528/anti-abortion-pregnancy-centers-collect-data-investigation/>

⁵ Bryant, A. G., & Levi, E. E. (2012). Abortion misinformation from crisis pregnancy centers in North Carolina. *Contraception*, 86(6), 752–756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2012.06.001>

statistics, exaggerated or inaccurate health risks associated with abortion, and unsupported claims about the psychological consequences of terminating a pregnancy.⁶ Some chilling examples include:

- An anti-abortion center in Worcester, Massachusetts was sued for failing to diagnose an ectopic pregnancy, causing a life-threatening emergency for the patient.⁷ The nurse who performed the ultrasound scan at the center did not take sufficient medical measures to ensure the pregnancy was viable, and as a result the patient's fallopian tube ruptured a month later and caused significant internal bleeding. An undiagnosed ectopic pregnancy can often be fatal. Per the findings of the lawsuit, insufficient training and lack of safety protocols put the patient's life at risk.
- In Texas, an anti-abortion center alleged that a patient was 13 weeks pregnant, when in reality she was only 9 weeks pregnant. This misinformation prevented the patient from being able to make a timely decision to obtain a legal abortion.⁸

These two examples highlight how anti-abortion centers lie or provide incomplete, inaccurate information to their clientele, which can be extremely dangerous for the individuals who attempt to access medical services at their centers. Inaccurate information can lead to misguided choices that impact mental and physical health, emotional well-being, and long-term life outcomes. Misinformed decisions might result in delayed or inadequate medical care and pose risks to future fertility as well as maternal and fetal health.⁹ Furthermore, inaccurate information about abortion risks and alternatives can create confusion and fear, influencing people to make decisions that might not align with their actual medical needs or personal circumstances.¹⁰

Notably, in January 2023, New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin issued a consumer alert that warned New Jerseyans of the deceptive practices of anti-abortion centers.

⁶ Adams, A., & Bergengruen, V. (2022, June 22). Anti-Abortion Centers' Databases Could Be Weaponized Post-Roe. Retrieved from Time website: <https://time.com/6189528/anti-abortion-pregnancy-centers-collect-data-investigation/>

⁷ McShane, J. (2023, June 29). Crisis pregnancy center failed to spot an ectopic pregnancy, threatening patient's life, lawsuit alleges. Retrieved from NBC News website: <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/womens-health/crisis-pregnancy-center-ectopic-pregnancy-lawsuit-rcna91660>

⁸ Cott, E., Tabrizy, N., Aufrechtig, A., Lieberman, R., & Morgan, N. (2022, June 23). They Searched Online for Abortion Clinics. They Found Anti-Abortion Centers. The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/texas-abortion-human-coalition.html>

⁹ Bryant, A. G., & Levi, E. E. (2012). Abortion misinformation from crisis pregnancy centers in North Carolina. *Contraception*, 86(6), 752–756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2012.06.001>

¹⁰ Reproductive Equity Now. (n.d.). About Anti-Abortion Centers. <https://reproequitynow.org/about-antiabortion-centers>

The alert provides an overview of how AACs operate and work to promote biased information about abortion to pressure and mislead individuals from making the best pregnancy decisions for themselves. The alert also highlights ways AACs mimic the language and practices of legitimate, licensed and regulated reproductive health care providers. The below list of characteristics is included in the alert; note that use of the term “crisis pregnancy center” is reflected in the source document.

“A Crisis Pregnancy Center may:

- *Be a website, a call center, an app, or a physical location that looks like or is located near a clinic or doctor’s office.*
- *Have a name that is similar to that of a health care provider, including words like “care,” “health,” “pregnancy,” “resource,” and “choice.” (Note that many CPCs do not call themselves “crisis pregnancy centers”; nor do they use that term in advertising.)*
- *Offer free services (including pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and adoption information) or supplies (including diapers and baby clothes) to individuals seeking abortion or reproductive health care services.*
- *Offer limited “counseling” services without providing complete or accurate information regarding all options for reproductive health care, including abortion.*
- *Postpone or reschedule appointments to delay individuals’ access to abortion care.*
- *Pressure individuals to delay an abortion or continue a pregnancy, including by providing false or misleading information about the safety and legality of abortion care.*

A facility may be a Crisis Pregnancy Center even if it:

- *Has staff and volunteers who wear medical attire and collect personal and health information.*

- *Contains examination rooms with medical equipment (like an ultrasound machine) and supplies.*¹¹

A Note on Naming: Anti-Abortion Centers vs. “Crisis Pregnancy Centers”

Also commonly referred to as “crisis pregnancy centers,” or, within the anti-abortion movement, “pregnancy resource centers,” the term “anti-abortion centers” or “AACs” is purposely used in this report to describe these organizations due to their primary objective of opposing abortion. The reproductive health/rights/justice movement encourages using the term anti-abortion centers to clearly identify their anti-abortion stance and help people avoid going to these centers if they seek abortion services. This terminology accurately encapsulates the AACs’ core stance and mission. Using the terminology “crisis pregnancy center” may further confuse audiences and foster more misunderstanding about these centers’ services. People who are seeking abortion services may assume that “crisis pregnancy centers” can be helpful due to the vagueness of the name. Using terminology like anti-abortion center clears up any confusion people may have about the centers’ stance and the services they provide, or lack thereof.

II. Anti-Abortion Centers Across New Jersey

Anti-abortion centers exist in every state in the United States. There are 2,527 identified brick-and-mortar AACs nationally, of which 66 percent offer limited medical services.¹² Here in New Jersey, research for this report has identified 59 brick-and-mortar AAC facilities operating in all 21 counties across the state – nearly three times the number of Planned Parenthood health centers. Local organizations operate some AACs, while others are affiliated with large national networks, such as Birthright International, CareNet, and the National Life Center. The AACs in New Jersey were compiled from resources available on the New Jersey Right to Life website¹³ and the Crisis Pregnancy Center Map.¹⁴ There are likely additional AACs in the state that may

¹¹ NJ Consumer Affairs. (2022). CONSUMER ALERT Crisis Pregnancy Centers consumer alert. Retrieved from https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases22/2022-1207_crisis-pregnancy-centers.pdf

¹² Swartzendruber, A., & Lambert, D. N. (2020). A Web-Based Geolocated Directory of Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) in the United States: Description of CPC Map Methods and Design Features and Analysis of Baseline Data. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 6(1), e16726. <https://doi.org/10.2196/16726>

¹³ New Jersey Right to life. (2023) Retrieved from <https://njrtl.org/resources/womens-pregnancy-resource-centers/>

¹⁴ Swartzendruber, A., & Lambert, D. N. (2020). A Web-Based Geolocated Directory of Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) in the United States: Description of CPC Map Methods and Design Features and Analysis of Baseline Data. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 6(1), e16726. <https://doi.org/10.2196/16726>

not have a web presence. In addition, this number does not include mobile units operated by AAC organizations; though anecdotally, AACs have a mobile van presence throughout New Jersey.

Anti-abortion centers attempt to deceive potential patients by mimicking the marketing visuals, language, alleged services, and locations of licensed and regulated reproductive health care providers. **Two-thirds of New Jersey's 21 Planned Parenthood health centers have an anti-abortion center operating within three miles of their location; half have an AAC within one mile.** In addition to these permanent locations, AACs often park their mobile vans across the street from Planned Parenthood health centers and lure patients with sidewalk advertisements for free ultrasounds or other reproductive health services. Anecdotally, for years, Planned Parenthood health center staff have shared countless stories of patients who come into health centers under the impression that the mobile unit was a Planned Parenthood service. Patients recounted that they were intercepted by volunteers of the AAC who were standing in front of or near the entrance to the Planned Parenthood health center. These volunteers – often dressed in medical scrubs – guided patients towards the mobile unit with promises of free health care, which, to an unaware patient, appears to be a medical provider and an extension of Planned Parenthood. However, once in the mobile unit, patients get confused by the lack of medical care and the nature of the information they receive. Planned Parenthood health center staff must then untangle the misinformation and medical inaccuracies pushed by the AACs to ensure the patient gets the reproductive health care services they want and need.

III. Misrepresentation and Misinformation

Accessing accurate and unbiased information about all available pregnancy options, including abortion, is crucial for people to make decisions that align with their individual circumstances and beliefs. Decisions about reproductive health should be based on accurate and sound medical evidence and conducted under the guidance of trained and/or licensed health care providers. By employing manipulative appeals, sharing misinformation about health care options, and presenting information with a bias against abortion, anti-abortion centers can coerce people into decisions and inhibit a person's agency from choosing what's best for their health and lives.

As one example, inaccurate information and persuasive tactics can significantly impede timely decision-making, especially when time sensitivity is crucial, as with accessing abortion care. As highlighted in the example in the section above, anti-abortion centers have a history of providing incorrect ultrasound dating, leading a client to believe they are earlier or later in their pregnancies than they actually are. An individual will begin to make personal calculations based on this incorrect information on their pregnancy decision. Couple that with the AAC's coercive, persuasive efforts that may dissuade individuals from choosing abortion, and individuals may completely miss their opportunity to access safe and legal reproductive health care.¹⁵ In this process, AACs strip individuals of their autonomy.

Anti-abortion centers also often spread misinformation about abortion procedures that are not based in sound medical practice. For example, in the last several years, there has been a national trend of anti-abortion organizations pushing an unproven medical intervention referred to as “abortion pill reversal.” It's crucial to note that the concept of “abortion reversal” is not accepted within the medical community. Major medical organizations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Medical Association (AMA), have expressed concerns about the lack of scientific evidence supporting the efficacy and safety of medication abortion reversal procedures.¹⁶ The potential risks associated with this untested intervention, including complications for both the pregnant person and the fetus, have significant ethical concerns.

The state of California is currently suing anti-abortion centers operating in the state for promoting “abortion reversal.” The suit, filed in September 2023, highlights the continued fraudulent and misleading advertising of this intervention despite no evidence that it is safe or effective. “HBI and RealOptions took advantage of pregnant patients at a deeply vulnerable time in their lives, using false and misleading claims to lure them in and mislead them about a potentially risky procedure,” said California Attorney General Rob Bonta in a statement announcing the lawsuit.¹⁷ Yet even with ongoing litigation, AACs continue to share information

¹⁵ Adams, A., & Bergengruen, V. (2022, June 22). Anti-Abortion Centers' Databases Could Be Weaponized Post-Roe. Retrieved from Time website: <https://time.com/6189528/anti-abortion-pregnancy-centers-collect-data-investigation/>

¹⁶ ACOG. (n.d.). Medication abortion reversal is not supported by science. Facts Are Important: Medication Abortion “Reversal” Is Not Supported by Science. <https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/medication-abortion-reversal-is-not-supported-by-science>

¹⁷ Attorney General Rob Bonta (2023, September 21). Attorney General Bonta Sues Anti-Abortion Group, Five California Crisis Pregnancy Centers for Misleading Patients. Retrieved from State of California website: <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-sues-anti-abortion-group-five-california-crisis-pregnancy>

on this purported intervention, jeopardizing the health and well-being of both the pregnant person seeking reproductive health care and the fetus.

Figure 1: From First Choice Women's Centers Blog on "Advertising Abortion Reversal"

Have you taken the first dose of the abortion pill, Mifepristone (Mifeprex or RU-486) and having second thoughts? Do you regret your decision and wish you could reverse the effects of the abortion pill? There is an effective process for reversing the abortion pill, called **ABORTION PILL REVERSAL**. 24-hour hotline: **(877) 558-0333**.

In an attempt to provide cover for themselves, it is not uncommon for anti-abortion center websites to include disclaimers stating that the information provided is an “educational service” and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional and/or medical advice. These disclaimers are often placed in small font at the bottom of the site, which likely makes them less noticeable to users. Because AACs present themselves in a way that suggests they are licensed and regulated medical facilities or clinics to an unknowing potential client, individuals seeking information may assume that they are receiving accurate and comprehensive medical guidance. The disclaimers, while present, may not be prominent enough to catch the attention of those visiting the website, potentially leading to misunderstandings about the nature and reliability of the information provided.¹⁸

Figure 2: Disclaimer from Hope Pregnancy Centers, Inc. Website

Disclaimer: Hope Pregnancy Centers, Inc. does not offer or refer for pregnancy terminations or birth control. Information is provided as an educational service and should not be relied on as a substitute for professional and/or medical advice.

Individuals seeking information about pregnancy options deserve clear and transparent communication about the nature of services offered by AACs and the limitations of the information provided. New Jersey has recently made steps in the right direction to provide people with clear information about pregnancy options by launching the

¹⁸ Adams, A., & Bergengruen, V. (2022, June 22). Anti-Abortion Centers' Databases Could Be Weaponized Post-Roe. Retrieved from Time website: <https://time.com/6189528/anti-abortion-pregnancy-centers-collect-data-investigation/>

Reproductive Health Information Hub¹⁹ website in October 2023. This state website contains clear information regarding reproductive health resources: rights, coverage options, and resources for patients and providers. By further promoting this website as a tool for individuals to find legitimate, unbiased, accurate information, stakeholders and public health professionals can continue to support the reproductive autonomy of all New Jerseyans.

IV. Unlicensed Medical Services

Licensed and regulated reproductive health care facilities, such as Planned Parenthood, offer a full range of reproductive health care services, including abortion care, birth control, annual gynecological exams, breast and cervical cancer screenings, and testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Accurate STI testing is crucial for individual health and broader public health efforts. Undetected and untreated STIs can lead to various complications, including infertility, chronic health problems, and an increased risk of transmitting infections to sexual partners. The reliable identification of STIs through accurate testing not only ensures proper treatment for affected individuals but also contributes to preventing the spread of infections within communities.²⁰

The recent rapid growth of syphilis cases in New Jersey has brought renewed attention to the importance of STI testing services.²¹ Syphilis is a serious bacterial infection that, if left untreated, can lead to severe health issues, including damage to the brain, nervous system, heart, and major organs; untreated syphilis can be fatal.²² Since 2015, overall cases of syphilis in New Jersey have increased by 81 percent; cases of syphilis in women have increased by 143 percent, and cases of congenital syphilis have increased from 0 cases in 2015 to 24 cases in 2020.²³ As syphilis has dramatically increased, it is even more important to collect and report accurate data to ensure and safeguard public health.

¹⁹ <https://www.nj.gov/health/reproductivehealth/>

²⁰ CDC. (2023, February 24). STD Testing | DASH | CDC. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov website:

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/healthservices/infobriefs/std_testing_information.htm#:~:text=Many%20STDs%20don

²¹ NJ DOH. (2022). Congenital Syphilis Update, Information and Recommendations for Providers. STD Health Alert.

<https://www.nj.gov/health/hivstdtb/stds/STD%20Health%20Alert-syph%20screening%20pg%20pt%206-21.pdf>

²² CDC (2023). Syphilis – CDC Detailed Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/stdfact-syphilis-detailed.htm>

²³ NJSHAD. (2022). NJSHAD - Query Result - New Jersey Sexually Transmitted Disease Data - Crude Rates (Cases Per 100,000 Population). Retrieved September 11, 2023, from www-doh.state.nj.us website:

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www-doh.state.nj.us/doh-shad/query/result/std/STD/CrudeRate.html&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1694456454757108&usg=AOvVaw1h0lCC78Dj93qexpQPLzaS>

In order to get pregnant people in their doors, anti-abortion centers that operate in New Jersey have begun advertising free STI testing services. Of the 54 anti-abortion centers in the state that operate a website, 21 (39 percent) mentioned STI information and/or testing at their centers prominently on their website.

Figure 3: Screenshot from “Choice One” Website

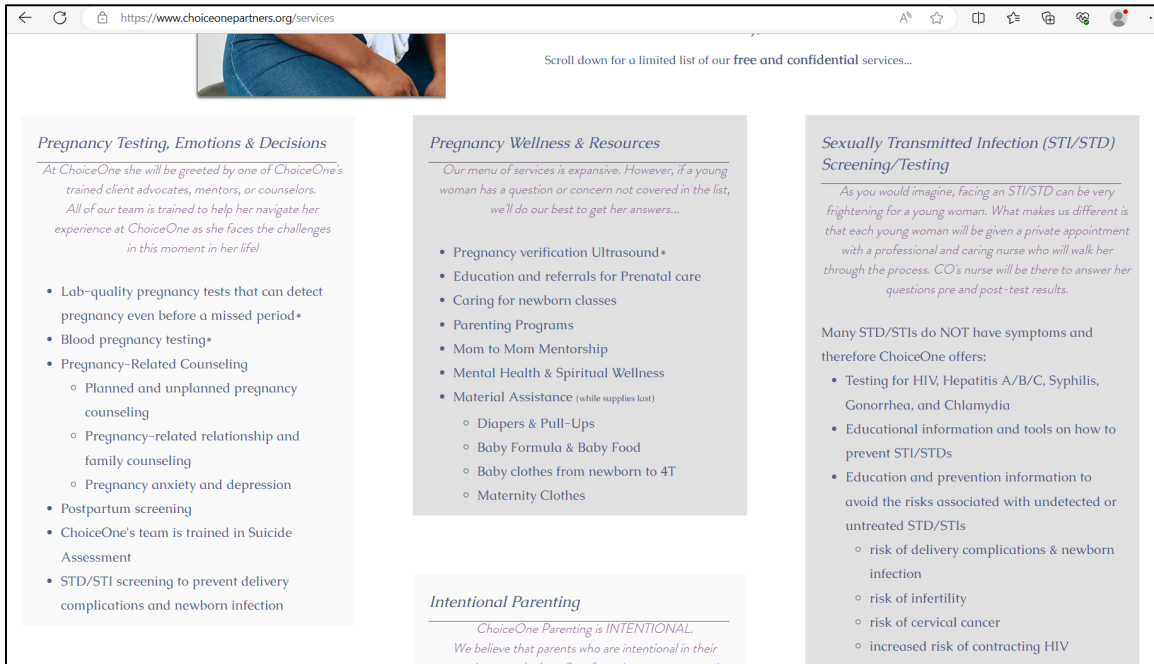
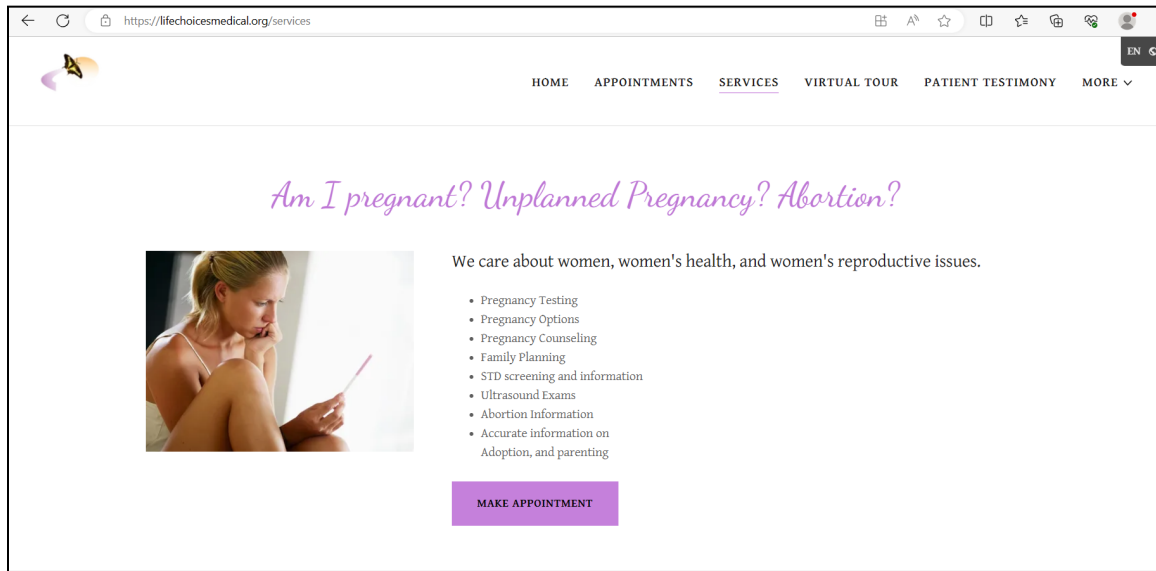


Figure 4: Screenshot from “Life Choices Resource Center” Website



However, anti-abortion centers in New Jersey are not regulated by the New Jersey Department of Health. In addition to the ethical concern that AAC clients may believe they are accessing medical services from a licensed provider in a regulated facility, this discrepancy means that AACs are not beholden to NJDOH reporting requirements for STI test results. This poses challenges in tracking and addressing STI trends and potentially undermines the overall public health efforts to prevent and manage STIs if AACs are improperly reporting STI data, or not reporting it at all.²⁴

Inadequate reporting of STI testing by anti-abortion centers results poses significant risks:

- a. *Missed treatment*: When a patient has a positive test result, how can unregulated AACs address treatment and infection management? Without medical staff, medications cannot be prescribed. As a result, individuals may miss out on timely treatment, allowing infections to progress and potentially lead to infertility or other health complications.
- b. *Continued transmission*: Unreported and/or untreated positive cases mean that

²⁴ NJ Consumer Affairs. (2022). CONSUMER ALERT Crisis Pregnancy Centers consumer alert. Retrieved from https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases22/2022-1207_crisis-pregnancy-centers.pdf

infected individuals might unknowingly spread STIs to their partners, contributing to the overall prevalence of infections.

- c. *Limited intervention*: Incomplete reporting hampers the ability to accurately assess the scope of STI epidemics and design effective prevention strategies. Accurate reporting of positive STI cases contributes to state and local monitoring of disease prevalence, outbreaks, and public health trends.
- d. *Reduced resource allocation*: Inaccurate reporting hampers the allocation of resources for STI prevention, intervention, and treatment for licensed and regulated health care providers, as funding decisions are based on incomplete information.
- e. *Policy design challenges*: Public health policies use accurate data to design effective strategies. Inadequate reporting makes it challenging to develop policies that reflect the population's true needs.

Not only are anti-abortion centers not required to adhere to NJDOH testing practices, but there is also a lack of transparency in *how* AACs provide testing services. This is in contrast to regulated facilities like Planned Parenthood, which employ licensed medical professionals who provide STI testing and treatment services in line with medical best practices and in compliance with standards as set forth by state regulating bodies. The lack of transparency in testing practices by AACs has ethical and public health implications:

- a. *Regulatory oversight*: As AACs are non-licensed and unregulated facilities, it is difficult to enforce reporting requirements as they are not subject to a wide variety of state and federal requirements and standards.
- b. *Nonmedical nature*: AACs lack trained medical personnel, leading to concerns about the accuracy of testing and proper reporting.
- c. *Informed consent*: Lack of transparency may prevent patients from providing fully informed consent for testing or treatment, potentially compromising their autonomy.

- d. *Biased information*: If AACs provide inaccurate health information, it might result in uninformed decision-making, which is unethical and undermines patient autonomy.
- e. *Distrust in health care services*: Inadequate reporting and lack of transparency erode public trust in health care providers and facilities, as individuals might question the accuracy and reliability of testing outcomes.
- f. *Ethical concerns*: Failing to provide complete, unbiased, and accurate information undermines the ethical principles of patient autonomy, informed consent, and patient-centered care.

VI. Conclusion

This report underscores the significant concerns surrounding anti-abortion centers in New Jersey. While presenting themselves as regulated facilities employing licensed medical professionals providing a variety of reproductive health care services, these facilities disseminate inaccurate and potentially harmful medical information, use deceptive and coercive tactics, provide certain medical services without proper oversight and regulation, and infringe upon individuals' right to make autonomous decisions. Inaccurate information about reproductive health care services can lead to unintended health consequences, and deceptive practices can undermine personal autonomy.

Given the nature of the decisions faced when considering abortion, it is crucial that patients have access to reliable and unbiased information. Ensuring that anti-abortion centers uphold ethical standards and provide comprehensive, evidence-based information is essential to support pregnant people in making informed choices that align with their personal values, health needs, and circumstances. A comprehensive investigation and evaluation of AAC practices can help further identify areas of concern and lead to necessary reforms that protect reproductive rights, promote transparency in health care services, and safeguard public health at a time when STIs are on the rise.

When performed in line with best medical practices, STI testing and reporting are essential for disease surveillance and public health interventions. Addressing the challenges

posed by STI testing services offered by unregulated and unlicensed anti-abortion centers requires collaboration between healthcare providers and public health agencies to educate the public and raise awareness of the potential lack of standardized STI testing, reporting, and treatment for positive results at AACs. Additionally, regulatory reforms and transparency initiatives, such as investigation of STI testing and reporting practices at AACs (either directly or through laboratory partnerships), may help ensure accurate reporting in order to achieve effective STI prevention and control efforts.²⁵

As access to reproductive health care is pushed further out of reach in states across the country, New Jersey must continue to lead by example as a state that upholds reproductive freedom for all. Addressing the concerns around anti-abortion centers and their inaccurate, coercive behaviors is one step that New Jersey can take to continue safeguarding reproductive rights. Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey calls upon our state's policymakers and regulators to continue asking critical questions of anti-abortion centers to ensure the best possible health care outcomes for all New Jerseyans.

²⁵ NJ Consumer Affairs. (2022). CONSUMER ALERT Crisis Pregnancy Centers consumer alert. Retrieved from https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases22/2022-1207_crisis-pregnancy-centers.pdf

Appendix: Identified Anti-Abortion Centers in New Jersey

1. 1st Way
Collingswood, Camden County
4 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

2. 1st Way
Woodbury, Woodbury County
5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

3. 1st Way Pregnancy Services
Willingboro, Burlington County
4 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

4. ABBA Pregnancy Center
Palmyra, Burlington County
5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

5. Action Pregnancy Center
New Brunswick, Middlesex County
3 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

6. Bethany Christian Services
Fair Lawn, Bergen County
2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

7. Birth Haven
Newton, Sussex County
0.2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

8. Birthright
Maywood, Bergen County
2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

9. Birthright
Bloomfield, Essex County
2.3 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

10. Birthright
Freehold, Monmouth County
Not licensed by NJDOH

11. Birthright
Toms River, Ocean County
Not licensed by NJDOH

12. Birthright

Dover, Morris County

7 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

13. Birthright

Barnegat, Ocean County

Not licensed by NJDOH

14. Birthright

Red Bank, Monmouth County

0.5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

15. Bridge Women's Center

Old Bridge, Middlesex County

8 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

16. Care Net Pregnancy Resources

Hackettstown, Warren County

Not licensed by NJDOH

17. Catholic Charities- Crisis Pregnancy Center

Vineland, Cumberland County

Not licensed by NJDOH

18. Catholic Family and Community Services

Paterson, Passaic County

Not licensed by NJDOH

19. Catholic Social Services

Camden, Camden County

2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

20. ChoiceOne

Lawrenceville, Mercer County

6 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

21. Choice of the Heart

Turnersville, Gloucester County

7 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

22. Cornerstone Women's Resource Center

Salem, Salem County

Not licensed by NJDOH

23. Crisis Pregnancy Service

Egg Harbor City, Atlantic County

Not licensed by NJDOH

24. First Choice Women's Center

Morristown, Morris County

0.4 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

25. First Choice Women's Center

Newark, Essex County

0.9 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

26. First Choice Women's Resource Center

Plainfield, Union County

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

27. First Choice Women's Resource Center

New Brunswick, Middlesex County

3 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

28. First Choice Women's Resource Center

Montclair, Essex County

0.6 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

29. First Choice Women's Resource Center

Jersey City, Hudson County

3 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

30. Friendship Center for New Beginnings
Flemington, Hunterdon County
2.7 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Advertises STI testing
Not licensed by NJDOH

31. Gateway Pregnancy Center
Irvington, Essex County
3 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

32. Gateway Pregnancy Center
Elizabeth, Union County
0.2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

33. Gateway Pregnancy Center
Plainfield, Union County
0.2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

34. Golden Cradle
Cherry Hill, Camden County
5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

35. Good Counsel
Secaucus, Hudson County
5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Not licensed by NJDOH

36. Good Counsel Home

Riverside, Burlington County

2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

37. Good News Crisis Pregnancy Center, Inc.

Perth Amboy, Middlesex County

1 mile from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

38. Helpers of God's Precious Infants

Gloucester City, Camden County

5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

39. Inspire Family Life Center

Warren, Somerset County

Not licensed by NJDOH

40. Jersey Shore Women's Center

Galloway, Atlantic County

Not licensed by NJDOH

41. Life Choices Resource Center

Metuchen, Middlesex County

5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

42. Life Choices, Inc.

Phillipsburg, Warren County

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

43. Lighthouse Pregnancy Center

Hackensack, Bergen County

0.5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

44. Lighthouse Pregnancy Center

Hawthorne, Passaic County

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

45. Lighthouse Pregnancy Center

Paterson, Passaic County

2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

46. Lighthouse Pregnancy Center

Wayne, Passaic County

Advertises STI testing

Not licensed by NJDOH

47. New Hope Pregnancy Resource Center

Westwood, Bergen County

7 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

48. Options for Her

Cherry Hill, Camden County

5 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

49. Options for Her

Ocean City, Cape May County

Not licensed by NJDOH

50. Options for Her

Trenton, Mercer County

2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

51. Our Gift of Hope Pregnancy Center

Englewood, Bergen County

0.3 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

52. Pregnancy Aid & Information Ctr, Inc.

Raritan, Somerset County

10 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

53. Several Sources Shelter

Ramsey, Bergen County

6 miles from Planned Parenthood health center

Not licensed by NJDOH

54. Solutions Health & Pregnancy Center
Shrewsbury, Monmouth County
1 mile from Planned Parenthood health center
Advertises STI testing

55. Solutions Health & Pregnancy Center
Freehold, Monmouth County
Advertises STI testing

56. The Center for Great Expectations
Bridgewater, Somerset County
Not licensed by NJDOH

57. The Open Door Pregnancy Center
Toms River, Ocean County
Not licensed by NJDOH

58. Today's Choice Resource Center
Newton, Sussex County
0.2 miles from Planned Parenthood health center
Advertises STI testing
Not licensed by NJDOH

59. Women's Options
Washington, Warren County
1 mile from Planned Parenthood health center
Advertises STI testing
Not licensed by NJDOH