



HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

"LIMITED SERVICE PREGNANCY CENTERS"

This text available at <http://www.nwwlc.org/focus/health/crisis.html>

WHAT ARE LIMITED SERVICE PREGNANCY CENTERS? HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT FROM MEDICAL CLINICS?

Limited service pregnancy centers, often called "crisis pregnancy centers," are usually run by organizations that are opposed to abortion. It is the goal of most, if not all of these organizations, to discourage women from having abortions – but some are not honest and upfront that this is their mission. These centers DO NOT provide abortion services, information, or referrals. Most will not provide or refer for contraceptives. Most provide no medical services of any kind, other than a pregnancy test and possibly an ultrasound without any medical diagnosis. Some also provide misleading or medically inaccurate information..

WHY SHOULD WOMEN BE CONCERNED ABOUT LIMITED SERVICE PREGNANCY CENTERS?

- *Some of these centers provide false or misleading information about pregnancy, abortion, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections.*
Although these centers offer free pregnancy tests and counseling, the counselors do not give women information about all available medical options so that women can make informed decisions. Some centers also provide information about reproductive health that is just not true, putting women's health at risk. **For example, various centers in Washington State have told women that condoms do not protect against sexually transmitted infections; that abortion causes breast cancer; that abortion causes high rates of suicide, depression, or other mental health effects; that abortion increases the potential for miscarriages later in life; and that emergency contraception has dangerous side effects for women. All of these claims are false.**
- *Some provide misleading information designed to delay a woman's decision about an unplanned pregnancy.*
While some limited service pregnancy centers do disclose right away, either on their website or over the phone, that they don't provide abortions, some mislead women about their services and encourage women to come in for an appointment without telling them what to expect. Some centers also try to delay women by telling them that they have plenty of time to decide and that abortions

are available throughout pregnancy, or that pregnancy tests are not accurate so they should wait a few weeks and get an ultrasound. Others tell women that they should just wait to see if they miscarry before deciding what to do about an unplanned pregnancy. **All of these claims use false or misleading information to delay women from making the decisions they need to make, including whether to obtain an abortion or to get prenatal care for a healthy pregnancy.** See our [Tools to Help You](#) for more information about [your reproductive rights in Washington State](#). We will have this information available for Montana, Idaho, Alaska, and Oregon later in 2010.

- *They have refused to give women their records or written pregnancy test results.*
Women throughout the Northwest have complained that these centers routinely refuse to give women the results of their pregnancy tests in writing, a violation of medical records privacy laws.

WHAT IS LEGAL VOICE DOING ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?

We are urging the Washington State Legislature to pass a bill that will help stop some of these deceptive practices. [See our press release on HB 2837 and SB 6452.](#)

We want to help women who've been harmed by deceptive limited service pregnancy centers. **We want to hear from you.** [Contact us](#) if you or someone you know has had a bad experience at a limited service pregnancy center or other similar organization.

Women's rights. Nothing less.