



FLORIDIANS *for*
REPRODUCTIVE
FREEDOM

Communications Tip Sheet #4:

Best Practices: Letters to the Editor re: anti-abortion pregnancy centers

Help warn away pregnant Floridians who are considering all options

Help readers understand the problems with anti-abortion pregnancy centers.

Anti-abortion pregnancy centers offer a form of “counseling” that consists of volunteers or staff asking probing questions and pressuring a woman to carry her pregnancy to term. Anti-abortion pregnancy centers are financially backed by other anti-abortion organizations; some receive taxpayer funds pushed through by anti-abortion legislators.

Inform readers of their proliferation

In the United States, anti-abortion pregnancy centers outnumber legitimate abortion providers by a 3-to-1 ratio. There are more than 190 anti-abortion pregnancy centers in Florida; 58 health centers offer abortion care.

Help readers recognize anti-abortion pregnancy centers in their own community, perhaps listing them by name.

Anti-abortion pregnancy centers give their centers neutral-seeming names such as “Choices” and post innocuous signs such as “Free pregnancy test” or “Think you might be pregnant?”

Anti-abortion pregnancy centers are often intentionally situated near abortion providers in an attempt to trick the true clinic’s patients into coming into their location.

Expose readers to the deceptions used by anti-abortion pregnancy centers by describing their tactics.

Anti-abortion pregnancy centers are known to “schedule” someone for an abortion to keep them from seeking actual health care.

Anti-abortion pregnancy centers are known to separate people from their clothes or personal belongings to make it more difficult for them to leave.

Anti-abortion pregnancy centers are known to give false, inaccurate, and misleading information to women to dissuade them from accessing contraception and abortion.

Staff and volunteers are often untrained individuals who pose as medical professionals wearing scrubs. They frequently

make inaccurate claims that abortion poses health risks such as infertility, breast cancer, and birth defects in future pregnancies. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, these claims are medically inaccurate and deliberately misleading.

Ask readers to take action.

Help get the word out to those vulnerable to anti-abortion pregnancy centers: talk to family and friends, share information on social media, join a local reproductive rights group working to expose anti-abortion pregnancy centers, sign and circulate a petition calling out biased and untruthful fake women’s health centers (see the toolkit at endthelies.com).

Getting in print.

The more you understand the policies and practices of the newspaper to which you are submitting, the better your chance of getting in print. Some things to consider:

- Submit your letter via your target newspaper’s online form; they prefer receiving that way and you know your offering is going directly to the correct reviewers for consideration.
- Comply with your target newspaper’s word limit, which nearly all disclose on their websites.
- Whenever possible, reference an article or editorial already published in your target newspaper related to your chosen topic. This greatly improves the chance of getting published.
- Note that many newspapers will require that letter writers submit contact information with their letter. Phone numbers won’t be published. This is just to verify your identity.
- Be clear and concise—you may only have 200 words (or less) to make your point.
- Be yourself. You don’t need to write like an academic or a policy expert. Remember, you are a smart, passionate citizen who is paying attention, one who other citizens might identify with—and that is the most powerful thing you can be.