

Reproductive Care Access and Information Act

Summary: The Reproductive Care Access and Information Act directs the state Department of Health to spend \$X,000,000 creating and promoting an 800 number and a website to provide contact information for nearby medical clinics that provide a full range of pregnancy services, including birth control, emergency contraception and abortion.

[NOTE: Unregulated Pregnancy Clinics (UPCs) often posture as abortion clinics and reproductive health care providers, ambiguously advertising themselves as such. Massachusetts created a program which, in part, sought to inform people that UPCs are not medical clinics. This measure addresses the same problem from the opposite direction, helping to advertise regulated reproductive health care clinics. Conservative states have spent \$1 billion to promote UPCs and much of that goes into advertising. It is time for more progressive states to step up and counterprogram against the UPCs' ubiquitous "Pregnant? Need Help?" style ads. This measure is particularly timely because it is anticipated that the current federal Administration and U.S. Congress will direct hundreds of millions of dollars in new federal funding to directly support UPCs.]

[BILL DRAFTING NOTE: This might be a bill or a budget amendment.]

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act shall be called the "The Reproductive Care Access and Information Act."

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

The legislature finds that:

1. Unregulated Pregnancy Clinics (UPCs) [local advocates may want to use another name, so consult with them] are facilities that purport to offer unbiased reproductive health care information, goods and services, but instead they are primarily intended to prevent clients from seeking reproductive health care.
2. Nationwide, UPCs spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year promoting their facilities as if they were regulated medical clinics.
3. Residents of [State] are being inundated with billboards and online advertising that frequently make UPCs seem like medical clinics staffed by licensed medical practitioners, when, overwhelmingly, they are not.
4. The state should provide or support telephone and Internet directories for unbiased reproductive medical services, and those directories must be advertised.

SECTION 3. PROMOTION OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

After section XXX, the following new section XXX shall be inserted:

(A) PROGRAM TO PROMOTE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLINICS

1. The Department of Health is directed to create or support telephone and online directories of reproductive health facilities which direct users to medical clinics that provide a full range of pregnancy services, including birth control, emergency contraception and abortion, and to social service agencies providing infant care supplies.
2. The telephone resource must be a toll-free number staffed by live operators 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and the website must be highly user-friendly, ensuring accessibility for users with limited internet skills.
3. Both the toll-free number and the website must allow callers and users to:
 - (a) Identify a selection of the nearest medical clinics that provide a full range of pregnancy services, including birth control, emergency contraception and abortion; and
 - (b) Contact those clinics by providing street addresses, web addresses and phone numbers.
4. The Department may create a new toll-free number and website for this program, or it may partner with other states or with one or more nonprofit organizations using existing or newly-created resources.
5. Once the toll-free number and website are created, the Department shall promote these resources through existing government means of communications as well as through paid advertising.

(B) APPROPRIATION

For the [fiscal year] Fiscal Year: \$5,000,000 [or appropriate amount] is appropriated to the [Department of Health] to create and advertise toll-free telephone and website directories of medical clinics that provide a full range of pregnancy services.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This law shall become effective on July 1, 20XX.