

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: My name is Christine Henneberg and I am a physician who provides abortion care in the state of California. I am grateful to you for considering an ordinance that would hold so-called "Crisis Pregnancy Centers" in the City of Los Angeles to higher standards and regulations to protect consumers who may be easily--and intentionally--misled by some of the information provided at these centers. As a physician who practices at multiple health centers known for providing abortion care (in addition to other services), I often see patients who tell me that they have already been to a Crisis Pregnancy Center before coming to see me. These women frequently tell me that instead of receiving accurate, unbiased healthcare information at these centers, they have been coerced into viewing their ultrasound, shown graphic photos of aborted fetuses, and given pamphlets describing unscientific claims about the harmful health effects of abortion. (Risk of breast cancer, risk of depression and suicide, etc--all of which have no basis in medical research, and in fact have been thoroughly disproven). Just last week, a patient seeking an abortion in my clinic tearfully asked me, "Do I have to look at the ultrasound?" I told her no, and she said the CPC where she'd been earlier in her pregnancy had insisted that she view her ultrasound as part of her visit. Such practices have no place in medical care, and certainly not for vulnerable women who are already at increased risk of misunderstanding the medical, legal, and financial implications of pregnancy termination. CPCs' stated primary goal is to delay or dissuade a woman who is considering pregnancy termination, which has nothing but untoward effects for her own health, her finances, and her family's well-being. (For excellent documentation of the long-term effects on women who seek abortion too late and are turned away, see the UCSF "Turnaway Study": <https://www.ansirh.org/research/ongoing/turnaway-study>.) I strongly urge you to approve this ordinance for the sake of protecting vulnerable pregnant persons in the City of Los Angeles, particularly at a time when residents and non-residents alike will be seeking abortion care. The more women who are targeted by CPCs, the more women are at risk for serious harms related to their deceptive practices. Thanks very much for your consideration of this issue.