



**Women's Law Project**  
*Defending Equality Since 1974*

## **Second Complaint Urges NJ Attorney General to Clarify if Unregulated Pregnancy Centers that Falsely Claim HIPAA Compliance While Collecting Sensitive Health Data Violates NJ Law**

*The anti-abortion "crisis pregnancy center"(CPC) cited in the first complaint scrubbed HIPAA language from their site, but more NJ CPCs use the same or similar language*

Contact: Tara Murtha

tmurtha@womenslawproject.org

**NEW JERSEY // December 20, 2024** – This week, the watchdog group Campaign for Accountability [filed a second complaint](#) asking NJ officials to assess if unregulated pregnancy centers collecting sensitive health data under misleading marketing claims are violating the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act.

Unregulated pregnancy centers, sometimes called "crisis pregnancy centers" (CPCs) are anti-abortion organizations that target low-income people and teenagers to prevent them from accessing abortion and contraception. Unregulated anti-abortion pregnancy centers are not medical providers and therefore do not have to comply with the health, safety, or privacy standards that legitimate medical facilities do.

Some CPCs, including Today's Choice Women's Center, the anti-abortion organization cited in [the first complaint filed in April](#), market their services with privacy assurances that invoke HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) language, though HIPAA does not generally apply to such centers.

Today's Choice Women's Center [assured](#) visitors to its website that it was "fully HIPAA-compliant," a deceptive claim," according to [a report](#) in the *New Jersey Monitor*. The same investigation reported that Today's Choice Women's Center declined to comment but [quietly deleted](#) the claim from its website after the complaint was filed.

"Advocates for medical privacy are seeking a reasonable clarification of state law," said **Tara Murtha, Director of Impact & Engagement**. "Allowing anti-abortion activists to seize our sensitive health data under misleading pretenses is a dangerous privacy violation at any time, but it's especially perilous now given the anti-abortion agenda includes punishing people in freedom states, advancing legislation that would subject women to the death penalty over abortion, and eliminating meager protections against anti-abortion violence. Meanwhile, homicide remains a leading cause of death for pregnant people in the United States. This is a matter of life and death. We need answers."

The follow-up complaint notes that Heartbeat International, an anti-abortion organization that is affiliated with Today's Choice Women's Center and known for developing sophisticated digital systems

for broad use by the anti-abortion movement, [was caught exposing clients' unencrypted personal health data](#) in a public YouTube video in May.

The new complaint identifies similarly situated, NJ-based anti-abortion “crisis pregnancy centers” that posted privacy statements similar to the one deleted by Today’s Choice Women’s Center.

The NJ-based organizations cited in the new complaint are:

- Care Net Pregnancy Resources of Warren County tells clients they may file a complaint with HHS if they feel their privacy rights have been violated.
- First Choice Women’s Resource Centers also invokes HHS—linking to the federal agency’s website in a section that says it is “required by law” to protect their clients’ health data.
- Solutions Health Pregnancy Center in Freehold and Shrewsbury asserts that it “assumes obligations that are consistent with the HIPAA Privacy Rules.”
- Cornerstone Women’s Resource Center tells clients that a “HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices” can be found at the footer of their website, but the notice is not there.

Consumers have a reasonable expectation of privacy in personal health information. They would be unlikely to provide that information to an organization that has misrepresented its confidentiality practices and/or legal obligations.

“We’re talking about protecting kids. According to their own privacy statements, CPCs collect personal health information on 13-year-olds,” **said Senior Staff Attorney Christine Castro**. “Where does their data go, how long is it stored, who is it shared with, and for what purpose?”

At least one CPC has [shared client data with law enforcement](#) to support the prosecution of a pregnant person. She had no intention of pursuing an abortion and went to a CPC for a free ultrasound.

At least 52 CPCs are known to be operating in New Jersey.

###