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Second Complaint Urges Pennsylvania Officials to Investigate Anti-Abortion “Crisis Pregnancy Center” (CPC) Data Collection & Privacy Practices

The CPC cited in the complaint scrubbed misleading language after the first complaint as its affiliate organization exposed sensitive client health data on YouTube

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PENNSYLVANIA // December 20, 2024 – Watchdog organization Campaign for Accountability filed a second complaint urging Pennsylvania officials to investigate if a Pennsylvania-based unregulated pregnancy center violated Pennsylvania’s Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law by posting misleading confidentiality statements on their website.

Unregulated pregnancy centers, sometimes called “crisis pregnancy centers,” are typically anti-abortion organizations that target low-income pregnant people and teenagers to prevent them from accessing abortion and contraception.

The second complaint notes that Options Women’s Center, the Scranton-based anti-abortion organization cited in the first complaint, scrubbed HIPAA references from its website at some point after the first complaint was filed in April.

From the complaint, which is available [here](#):

“On April 23, 2024, Campaign for Accountability (CfA) [asked your office](#) to investigate whether a Pennsylvania crisis pregnancy center (CPC), Options Women’s Center (OWC), violated state law by deceptively posting information on its website claiming clients’ personal health information (PHI) is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) when it is not.

One such apparently deceptive statement was that OWC's clients had the option to seek legal recourse by filing a complaint with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) if they believed OWC has misused their data.

CfA has since received a written determination from HHS explaining that a CPC in Louisiana, whose business model and affiliations appear indistinguishable from OWC's, is not a covered entity under HIPAA."

"Addressing renegade anti-abortion data collection is a critical component of protecting Pennsylvanians from out-of-state anti-abortion overreach," **said Tara Murtha, Director of Impact & Engagement.** "We urge the Shapiro Administration to clarify if Pennsylvania law allows activists targeting kids and pregnant people to collect, store, and potentially share personal health data under clearly misleading marketing claims."

Options Women's Center is affiliated with anti-abortion steering organizations CareNet and Heartbeat International, per the complaint. In May, [an investigation](#) revealed that an employee for Heartbeat International appeared to have leaked the names of women who were clients of one of its affiliates by posting a video that displayed their names and personal information including menstruation dates.

[As the complaint notes](#), other pregnancy centers in Pennsylvania use nearly identical privacy statements to the one scrubbed from Options Women's Center.

"Young people are less likely to be able to distinguish between a legitimate medical website and an anti-abortion organization with a stock photo of a doctor on the homepage," **said WLP Senior Staff Attorney Christine Castro**, who leads WLP's youth advocacy work. "So one CPC scrubbed misleading privacy language from its website after getting publicly called out. The same language is used on other CPC websites in Pennsylvania. Why aren't we working to protect young people from unregulated health data collection?"

[Research](#) shows most Americans are concerned about who is collecting their personal information and for what purpose. Pennsylvanians concerned about their privacy after visiting a pregnancy center [can submit an anonymous report](#) outlining their concerns to the Attorney General.

At least 156 CPCs are known to be operating in Pennsylvania.

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