

DESIGNED to DECEIVE

A STUDY OF THE CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTER INDUSTRY IN NINE STATES

Alaska State Findings

- ▶ The Alliance Study identified **11 crisis pregnancy centers** in Alaska.
- ▶ There are currently **4 abortion care clinics** left in the state.

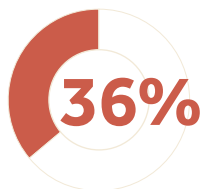
IN ALASKA, CPCs OUTNUMBER
ABORTION CARE CLINICS BY MORE THAN **3:1**



Over half (54%) of CPCs in Alaska are affiliated with a U.S.-based evangelical anti-abortion organization called Care Net. Another 45% are affiliated with Heartbeat International, an anti-abortion organization with strong ties to members of the former Trump administration.¹

Most Common Services Offered by CPCs in Alaska

The services Alaska CPCs provide pregnant people are similar to those that CPCs provide in other states. Their most common services are pregnancy testing (90.9%), "support" or "counseling" (90.9%), free/earned infant and maternity goods (81.8%), and "non-diagnostic" ultrasounds (36.4%).



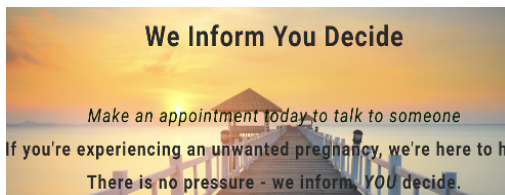
"NON-DIAGNOSTIC" ULTRASOUNDS OFFERED BY OVER 1/3 OF ALASKA CPCs ARE NOT RECOGNIZED BY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AS A MEDICAL SERVICE.²

Also known as "keepsake" or "souvenir" ultrasounds, they cannot determine gestational age, study placenta or amniotic fluid, or detect fetal abnormality, ectopic pregnancy, or fetal distress. It is unclear whether those performing CPC ultrasounds are trained to do so or to recognize any issues with a pregnancy. This CPC practice offers no medical benefit to the pregnant person or fetus, but may give pregnant people a false sense of security, and delay their search for legitimate prenatal care.

CPCs in Alaska Promote False & Biased Medical Claims

Almost all CPCs in Alaska (90.9%) promote false and/or biased medical claims. The Alliance Study defined as false or biased any medical claim that is untrue or unsubstantiated, that misstated or selectively cited factual information, or that used gratuitous or graphic language instead of clinical terms. Many CPCs falsely claim that abortions can lead to "increased promiscuity" and other psychological issues and that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer and infertility. Many make false claims about the safety and efficacy of medication abortion. Some provide false information about how late into a pregnancy medication abortion can be administered.

CPCs in Alaska also make deceptive and misleading claims on their websites, including that they have no agenda and provide full and unbiased information to support a pregnant person's choice:



▶ Screenshots from The Water's Edge CPC, Homer, Alaska, <http://the-waters-edge.org/pregnancy-and-beyond.html>

The message on the homepage of the Water's Edge CPC in Homer, Alaska is directly contradicted by language throughout the website that clearly seeks to dissuade pregnant people from choosing abortion. This deceptive claim to be unbiased because their services are free, their appropriation of the language of choice, and their vilification of abortion providers as profit-driven exploiters of pregnant people are among the misleading messaging seen on many CPC websites.

If you're experiencing an **unwanted pregnancy**, we're here to help. Because **we do not perform or refer for abortions** or make money from *any* choice you make, there is no pressure - **we inform, YOU decide.**

CPCs in Alaska Promote “Abortion Pill Reversal”

Over 9% of CPCs in Alaska promote a high-progesterone intervention the anti-abortion movement calls “abortion pill reversal” (APR). The claim behind APR is that a medication abortion can be reversed after the process has begun, junk science that is opposed by medical experts and harmful to the health of pregnant people. This rogue practice has been called “unproven and experimental” in *The New England Journal of Medicine* because neither the safety nor effectiveness of APR has been proven in clinic trials.³ As the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists concluded, APR is “unethical” and “not based on science.”⁴

Most CPCs in Alaska Do Not Provide Medical Services

No CPCs in Alaska offer contraception. Most Alaska CPCs offer no STI-related services (72.7%), no well-person care (100%) or referrals (90.9%), and no prenatal care (90.9%) or prenatal care referrals (63.6%). None of the CPCs affiliated with the anti-abortion group Heartbeat International offers prenatal care.⁵



CPCs in Alaska Lack Licensed Medical Professionals

While many CPCs present as a medical office, only three of the 11 CPCs in Alaska (27%) indicate that they have a licensed medical professional affiliated with their staff.

That these so-called clinics offer no prenatal care to their pregnant clients is deeply concerning given the well-documented correlation between a lack of prenatal care and maternal mortality. Pregnant people who do not receive prenatal care are five times more likely to have a pregnancy-related death than those who do receive prenatal care.

CPCs & the Maternal Mortality Crisis in Alaska

Since most of the CPCs in Alaska offer free pregnancy confirmation services but no prenatal care, while promoting false and biased medical claims, they may actually obstruct pregnant people’s timely access to health care at a time when the state and country are suffering a crisis of maternal mortality, driven by radical racial inequities in prenatal care, misdiagnosis, and missed warning signs.

The implications of these CPC practices are of particular concern for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, who make up just 2% of the total U.S. population but account for the second-highest number of maternal deaths in the country. Native Americans and Alaskan Natives are approximately 3.3 and 2.5 times more likely, respectively, to die while pregnant or as new mothers than white women are.⁶

From 2009–2018, Alaska reported an overall maternal mortality rate of 8.3 per 10,000 live births, but the rate among Alaska Natives was much higher than any other population in the state. By race, the white (non-Hispanic) death rate was 3.7 per 10,000 live births, the Asian and Pacific Islander death rate was 8.0, while the Alaska Native maternal death rate soared to 19.2 per 10,000 (n= 55) live births.⁷

Recommendations

The Alaska Legislature should pass laws to ensure access to medically accurate, age-appropriate, comprehensive sexual health education for all public school students, and comprehensive reproductive health care, including a full range of contraceptive options, for *all* Alaskans.

1. Claire Provost and Nandini Archer, “Exclusive: Trump-Linked Religious ‘Extremists’ Target Women With Disinformation Worldwide.” *Open Democracy*, February 10, 2020, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/trump-linked-religious-extremists-global-disinformation-pregnant-women/>.
2. J. S. Abramowicz and S. B. Barnett, “The safe use of non-medical ultrasound.” *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology*, April 28, 2009, <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/uog.6390>.
3. Daniel Grossman and Kari White, “Abortion ‘Reversal’ — Legislating without Evidence.” *The New England Journal of Medicine* 379, no. 16, October 2018: 1491, <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmp1805927>.
4. “Facts Are Important: Medication Abortion ‘Reversal’ Is Not Supported by Science.” American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, accessed September 29, 2021, <https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/medication-abortion-reversal-is-not-supported-by-science>.
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health, A-Z Health Topics, *Why do I need prenatal care?* (last updated April 1, 2019), [Prenatal care | womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov).
6. Alaska Division of Public Health, Maternal Child Death Review (MCDR), *Pregnancy Associated Mortality in Alaska* (January 2020), <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfn/Documents/mcheipi/mcdr/2019%20maternal%20mortality%20factsheet%20final.pdf>.
7. *Ibid.*