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Under Intimidation from Attorney General, Virginia Board of Health Rubber Stamps Draft Regulations

Patient Access to Abortion Care, Family Planning at Risk in Virginia
Statement from Virginia Coalition to Protect Women's Health

Richmond--- The Virginia Coalition to Protect Women's Health is deeply disappointed that the Virginia Board of Health chose to ignore sound science and failed to protect patient interests, including access to health care and patient confidentiality, by adopting these medically inappropriate regulations. We were dismayed that the Attorney General's office unilaterally hijacked the deliberations of the Board of Health so that it could impose its own political agenda.

Women's reproductive health centers provide a full array of safe, affordable preventive health services, including life saving cancer screenings, birth control, prenatal care and abortion care. The records show our health centers in Virginia already support the highest standards of care for women, yet women's health centers that provide first trimester abortion care were singled out for more onerous regulations than hospitals and out-patient surgical centers.

The Board of Health was presented with testimony and comments from numerous medical professionals urging changes to the regulations and had multiple opportunities to adopt amendments that would have assured continued access to the full range of reproductive health services, including family planning and abortion care.

Despite testimony that showed the proposed regulations will likely drive up health care costs for patients and drive health providers out of practice, under pressure from the Attorney General's office, the Board of Health chose to rubber stamp the draft regulations.

The sad fact is that the new regulations have no proven medical benefit to patients and, instead, will only serve to further limit patient access to abortion care as well as life saving cancer screenings, birth control, and the wide range of preventive care provided at women's reproductive health centers.

Simply put, rather than implement medically - proven policies, the Board of Health adopted regulations that will put women's health at risk.

In these difficult economic times, when Virginians need more access to affordable, high quality health care, not less, women and families around the state may now find themselves struggling to find a health care provider.

That's bad health policy and bad politics.

We call on Governor McDonnell to protect women's access and put a stop to politics at patient expense.

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