

AB 154 Non-Physician Abortion Fact Sheet

California Assembly Bill 154, if passed, will make it legal for non-physicians (nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, and physician assistants) to perform first-trimester abortions. This new breed of abortionist would need only to complete an 8-week training program to be considered “qualified” to do surgery on pregnant mothers.

1. CALIFORNIA FACES NO “ACCESS TO ABORTION” PROBLEM

Contrary to the claims of AB 154’s proponents, women face no difficulty in accessing abortion within the state. Already, 99% of California women live in counties with abortion providers, second nationwide only to Hawaii. California’s abortion rate is 40% higher than the national average (27.6% vs. 19.6%). Access to abortion is increasing, not decreasing; between 2005 and 2008, the number of abortion providers in California increased 23%. Source: State Facts About Abortion: California, available at: <http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/california.html>

2. LACK OF OVERSIGHT RESULTS IN UNRELIABLE DATA

Proponents claim that the safety of non-physician abortions has been established through data produced in the Health Workforce Pilot Project, HWPP No. 171. However, there was no effective review of patient records from HWPP No. 171; state health officials did not see actual patient records, but only the “abstracts” generated by the abortionists themselves. Due to this lack of oversight, safety data produced from the study is inherently unreliable.

3. UNQUALIFIED PRACTITIONERS RESULT IN INCREASED COMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

In December 2011, reports from the Pilot Project indicated an 80% increase in complications when non-physicians performed surgical abortions. The complications included incomplete abortion, failed abortion, hemorrhage/excessive bleeding, hematometra, infection, cervical injury, and uterine perforation. By opening the door to even more non-physicians to displace the physicians currently performing these procedures, AB 154 will put every woman at an almost doubled risk of suffering abortion complications.

4. THE COMPLICATED CASES: AB 154 REMOVES PHYSICIAN OVERSIGHT FOR CONTRAINDICATED PATIENTS

Several hundred patients were deemed ineligible to participate in the Pilot Project by supervising physicians because their physical conditions were considered serious enough to require a physician’s care. If AB 154 becomes law, there will be no supervising physicians to screen for at-risk patients, which will lead to additional risk of dangerous complications. Further, AB 154 does not require the non-physician abortionists to carry special malpractice insurance.