

FACT SHEET: CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS

Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs) are organizations that offer pregnancy counseling, free pregnancy tests, and may offer free ultrasounds or screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Most are affiliated with national religious organizations that have policies against promoting or providing contraceptives.^{1,2,3} Several states now use taxpayer dollars to fund CPCs. For example, Georgia currently provides over \$2 million in funding to CPCs.⁴ However, most CPCs are not licensed medical facilities,^{1,5} provide inaccurate medical information to clients, and do not adhere to medical and ethical practice standards.^{1,3,5,6,7,8,9,10} There are more than 2500 CPCs nationwide, including 90 in Georgia.¹¹ Given that Georgia has some of the highest rates of maternal mortality,¹² infant mortality,¹² HIV, and other STIs in the country,¹³ it is important that people have access to safe, evidence-based care and information to avoid adverse outcomes.

MOST CPCS ARE NOT LICENSED MEDICAL FACILITIES

Most CPCs are not licensed medical facilities and thus not subject to the same oversight and regulatory requirements as medical facilities,^{14,15} including Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines, which were established to protect the privacy of patients and their medical records.¹⁵

MOST CPCS DO NOT HAVE MEDICALLY LICENSED STAFF

CPCs are typically staffed by volunteers without clinical training or licensure.^{3,9} Only 38% of CPC websites in Georgia indicated that they were staffed by licensed medical care providers.⁹ In response to inquiries by phone or on websites, CPCs often do not specify that they have licensed medical providers on staff.^{9,16} Although they are not working in medical facilities, unlicensed volunteers at CPCs often wear white coats and see women in exam rooms.^{14,15}

CPCS PROVIDE INACCURATE MEDICAL INFORMATION

CPCs frequently provide incomplete and inaccurate health information.^{1,3,5,6,7,8,9,10} For example, when contraceptives are discussed on websites or in person, CPCs provide biased, misleading information by emphasizing and mis-stating failure rates, risks, and side effects.¹⁰ Recent studies that examined Georgia CPC websites also found misinformation about:

- **Condoms:** None of the Georgia CPC websites examined promoted consistent and correct condom use. Of the sites that mentioned condoms, 78% included statements that appeared to undermine confidence in condom effectiveness.¹⁰ Several studies show similar results, showing that the majority of PRC websites stress that condoms are not effective in preventing STDs or pregnancy.^{1,5,9}
- **Ultrasounds:** Nearly two-thirds of CPCs in GA offer limited ultrasound services. However, 15% of Georgia CPC websites that advertised ultrasound services falsely claimed that ultrasounds can be used to predict miscarriage.⁹

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