

Ohio House Health Committee

Proponent Testimony HB 378

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Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the House Health Committee – thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 378.

I have been a Registered Nurse for 39 years, and volunteered as a Hotline Nurse for the Abortion Pill Reversal (APR) Hotline for a little over 2 years. I am representing my individual views in this testimony. During my tenure with APR, I had the opportunity to assist upwards of 70 women, from across the entire country and even the world, receiving calls from as far away as Ghana, France, and India. It was an honor to assist these women during what was arguably the most difficult decision of their lives, all the while knowing that they would have to live with the consequences of this decision for the rest of their lives.

A recent Gallup poll identified nurses as the most trusted professional for the 20th year running, with an 81% approval from the public. This trust is earned by the dedication of the profession to providing clients with reliable, trusted, evidenced-based information with which they can make informed decisions about their health.

The profession of nursing views each individual's health in a holistic manner. "Health" encompasses, body, mind and spirit; the whole person. According to the American Holistic Nursing Association, AHNA, "This means that nurses should consider a patient's body, mind, spirit, culture, socioeconomic background and environment when delivering care." The American Nurses Association Standards of Practice state that , "Holistic nursing is practiced in all settings, with individuals, families, communities, and populations throughout the lifespan."

Informed consent is a critical component of any medical relationship. Inherent to that is treating individuals with dignity and respect, understanding that we must present a client with all the information she/he needs in order to make an informed choice. This is just one of the reasons that nurses have earned the trust of the public.

Women need to have access to all information available regarding chemical abortion, in order to make an informed decision, the results of which will have consequences for the rest of their life. They deserve the right to change their mind and hence deserve the right to be made aware, that if they do change their mind about a chemical abortion, that there is a possibility of reversing that decision.

Who of us haven't made a decision only to realize it was a mistake? Sometimes we even realize it almost immediately after having made the decision?

While working the hotline it was common to answer the phone to greet a woman, overcome with feelings of guilt, remorse, and regret. Often, they would tearfully inquire if reversing their abortion was really possible? Many would share that they had made the decision for a chemical abortion, feeling as though they had no other option. Many shared that they almost immediately felt that they had “made the biggest mistake of their life.” They expressed a desperate plea for help and for hope that they might be able to undo their choice.

I have had the unbelievable pleasure of sharing the joy of women and their families as they journeyed from regret and desperation, to hope as they attempted to reverse their abortions. They often expressed appreciation and relief that they were given a “do-over”, and a chance to undo a decision that they were going to have to live with the rest of their lives. Not all women regret their abortion, but for those that do, shouldn't they be made aware of this potential as they consider this deeply personal, life-changing decision? This decision is very literally a matter of life and death.

One woman, I will never forget, called and when I answered she said, “Tell me this is not true, that there is no such thing as reversing an abortion.” I provided the statistics on success of APR, >60% chance of successfully reversing a chemical abortion. She became almost inconsolable as she had recently completed her abortion and all the while she had been frantically searching the internet for a way to reverse her abortion. She was devastated to find out that APR had been available all along, if only she had discovered it soon enough to save her child. She felt angry and betrayed that this information had not been made known to her. I was not able to help her, but we can help to ensure that other women are not in this position.

Holistic, ethical care for these mothers, requires that they are given all the information needed to truly provide informed consent.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on HB378. I appreciate your consideration, and I urge you to vote yes on this bill.