



News for Immediate Release

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Department of Health to Implement New Law Licensing Abortion Facilities in Pennsylvania

Harrisburg – The Department of Health today announced that a new law taking effect June 19 requires abortion facilities to be licensed as outpatient surgical facilities and regularly inspected by the department.

“This law is a public health victory,” said Secretary of Health Dr. Eli N. Avila. “Since my first day on the job, the Department of Health has been working tirelessly to ensure that the horrors that took place in the Kermit Gosnell clinic in Philadelphia could never happen again.”

Act 122 was passed on Dec. 22, 2011 and applies to facilities that perform surgical abortions, in two categories:

- Class A facilities: These facilities are registered only and need to be accredited by a nationally-recognized accrediting agency before a registration can be granted. Class A facilities perform surgeries that require local anesthesia only.
- Class B facilities: These facilities are licensed facilities and must fully meet ambulatory surgical facility requirements. Class B facilities perform surgeries that require anesthesia where the patient is not fully conscious.

Facilities were notified in January of the requirements to apply for licensure and submit any requests for exception. Seventeen facilities submitted exception requests, which the department responded to on a case-by-case, location-by-location basis.

The department expects 14 of the 22 facilities will qualify to perform surgical abortions in Pennsylvania under the new law, pending final approval. Six are pursuing Class A registration, and eight are pursuing Class B licensure. Of the other eight facilities, one voluntarily closed on June 15, two have been placed under a hospital license subject to different regulations, and the rest will only be allowed to perform abortions that use prescribed medication and do not involve surgical procedures.

The Class A facilities will be issued a provisional license for three months, during which time each facility will seek accreditation toward registration.

The Class B facilities will be issued a provisional license for six months, allowing them time to meet any outstanding requirements to become ambulatory surgical facilities.

“This is not just about safety; it’s about accountability,” said Deputy Secretary for Quality Assurance Anna Marie Sossong. “We now have stronger oversight to monitor abortion facilities and ensure that the women in Pennsylvania receive a higher standard of care.”

The department can investigate complaints or conduct unannounced inspections at both types of facilities. The results of the inspections will be posted online at www.health.state.pa.us.

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