

Voices for Choice

by Canadians for Choice

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Abortion Access in Canada Decreases

In April 2007, Canadians for Choice released Canada's most current report on the accessibility of abortion services in Canadian hospitals. Researched primarily from the perspective of a pregnant woman in search of abortion services, *Reality Check: A Close Look at Accessing Abortion Services in Canadian Hospitals* reveals shocking truths about the accessibility of services in each province and territory and highlights

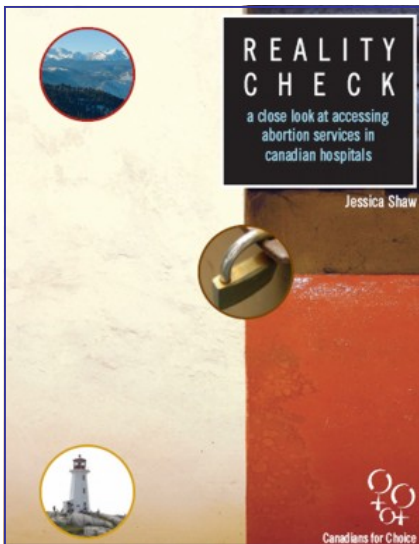
some of the prevailing barriers that women face when trying to obtain abortion related information.

The overall conclusion? Accurate information about abortion, and abortion services in general, are becoming increasingly difficult to access.

Key findings of the report include:

- 1 in every 6 Canadian hospitals, or 15.9%, provide accessible abortion services
- 75% of hospital staff did not know how to answer questions about abortion .
- Abortion services are poorly dispersed across Canada; the majority are located in cities, within 150 km of the American border.
- Requirements for abortion services vary from each province, territory and providing facility.
- Barriers women face when trying to access abortion services include: unknowledgeable staff, anti-choice judgement, costs and travel, reciprocal billing, bad referrals and voicemail.
- Canadian women are often disrespected when they ask about abortion services.

Canada must improve the accessibility of abortion services to ensure that we do not return to subjecting women to the dangerous circumstances that surrounded abortions in the past. A choice that cannot be exercised in a safe, accessible and supportive manner is no choice at all.



To order a copy of *Reality Check* contact us or view it online at www.canadiansforchoice.ca/report.html

Legal Action Taken to Restrict Abortion in USA

On April 18, 2007 the US Supreme Court upheld the federal "Partial-Birth" Abortion Ban Act, even though the law lacks an exception to protect the health of the pregnant woman. This act, named after the non-medical anti-choice term "partial-birth abortion", strictly prohibits the second trimester procedure of dilation and extraction (D&X). Although over 90% of abortions are done within the first trimester anyway, it is critical that facilities be able to offer late-term abortion services to accommodate the women who need to have an abortion after the thirteenth week of pregnancy. The Abortion Ban would prevent women from being able to access a D&X even in situations where a woman's health is in danger, and even if it would be the safest method of termination.

Doctors who believe a D&X to be the safest method of abortion for a woman would have to petition the government for approval to perform the procedure on a case-by-case basis. The ruling could potentially encourage anti-choice leaders to further restrict abortion in individual states with an understanding that the courts will now allow legislation that does not include a health exception in the case that a woman's life is in danger. Furthermore, the "Partial-Birth" Abortion Ban Act has many Canadian sexual health practitioners, advocates and members of the general population worried that the very basis on which abortion rights are founded will be put at risk through the open support of such anti-choice decisions

Leave a Legacy

Canadians for Choice Access Line Caller Feedback

"I came across Canadians for Choice on the net and I'm so thankful I made that phone call to them. The woman I spoke to was so understanding and listened patiently. She answered my every question, provided contacts for local clinics and offered all sorts of help. Here I found the support I needed through someone who understood and who accepted my decision. This was a big help to me- I felt less alone, and I was more certain that my decision was in fact the right one."

-January 2007

If you or someone you know requires information about abortion services, please call Canadians for Choice toll-free at:

1-888-642-2725

This information line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Did you know that *Canadians for Choice* has a "Leave a Legacy" Club? By including *Canadians for Choice* in your



will you can leave a lasting gift that will make a difference in the lives of Canadian women and girls. You can ensure that the struggle for better access to reproductive rights will continue in the future with your legacy. You may wish to leave a legacy for one of our specific programs such as the Access Line, a Canada wide toll free line that

provides information and counseling about reproductive choice, such as abortion. Or you may wish to consider leaving a gift to our Access Fund, a fund that helps women financially with travel and accommodation should she have to travel a long distance in order to access abortion services. Your gift could help a young woman living in rural Manitoba or Northern Ontario, for example, where abortion services are scarce or simply not available at all. And, of course, gifts can always be left for the

general purposes of *Canadians for Choice*. This way, your legacy will assist us in many areas; conducting research, providing education on all aspects of sexual and reproductive health issues, and raising the awareness of the Canadian public. Please help us reach our vision; a Canada where women are free to make choices about their reproductive health and have access to quality medical services that facilitates their choice.

Leave a legacy.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge **Frederick Joseph Campbell** who recently left a legacy to our organization. Mr. Campbell's gift will help in the fight to ensure reproductive choice for all Canadians. Please call us toll-free at **1-888-642-2725** or go to our website at **www.canadiansforchoice.ca** for more information on the "Leave a Legacy" Club.

Your Donations at Work!

In May 2007, Canadians for Choice received a call on our Access Line from a Maritimes woman who had unsuccessfully tried to self-induce an abortion. She called because she since decided that she wanted to continue the pregnancy and was worried about possible birth defects that could be caused by the self-induction attempt. We were able to consult a doctor who specializes in toxicology and confirm that in this particular instance, there were not likely to be any adverse side effects caused by the self-induction attempt. Because of the donations made to Canadians for Choice that support our 24 hour toll-free Access Line, the woman was reassured and was able to make a well-informed choice to continue her pregnancy.

Canadians for Choice

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To make a donation to Canadians for Choice, please send a cheque or money order to the address above. To make a credit card payment, please contact us and we would be happy for arrange it for you. You may also donate online at:



www.canadiansforchoice.ca