

Statement of Support: Senate Bill 1243 – Abortion Pill Reversal Informed Consent

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- Registered Nurse: 37 yrs – including High Risk OB, Fetal Intensive Care, traumatic pregnancy loss, perinatal education... Recently retired from St. Luke's MST Active RN licenses in the states of California and Idaho
- Served as Trauma Response Psychotherapist – The Counseling Team International (San Bernardino, CA)- critical incidence stress debriefings, marriage/family/individual counseling - specialty: Police/Fire Dept./ workplace trauma... Currently serve as facilitator of Rachel's Vineyard Boise - Post Abortion Healing Retreats (trauma cognizant model offered in 66 countries)

The Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses articulates the ethical obligations central to our profession. The essence of the Code is captured in the first of nine provisions.

Provision 1: The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.

The American Nurses Association interprets this provision to insure that **patients have “the right to self-determination” including “a moral and legal right to determine what will be done with and to their person.”** The nurse's obligation is to assure the patient has accurate, complete, and understandable information on which to base her decision regarding a course of treatment.

A woman who chooses drug-induced abortion has little time to grapple with a life altering decision, made under harrowing circumstances. Women attending our retreats share their memories of the decision-making process. Their stories portray themes of fear, ambivalence, coercion, abandonment, lack of support, and more. The multi-step process of drug induced abortion leaves a woman particularly vulnerable as she leaves the clinic with a still living child and no provision for support during the critical hours or days that follow when she may regret her decision or feel desperate to save the life of her child.

At a basic level of competency, each medical encounter begins with informed consent and ends with provision of a comprehensive discharge plan. ***It would make sense that as medicine advances, informed consent would be updated to reflect the option of APR as a safe and effective process that may not otherwise be known to the patient.***

The California Board of Registered Nurses acknowledges that APR is relevant to the practice of Nursing, and as a result, **the Board now offers continuing education units to any nurse who is willing to study this life saving process.** I am currently registered for this course with at least one other Idaho nurse and we imagine others will do the same.

For the women who, following the APR protocol, give birth to healthy living children, the reward requires little explanation – but I would like to address the women who may not have a successful outcome. These women are just as important.

As Nurses, we do everything we can to provide for the health and well being of our patients and their families. We also journey with them into some of the darkest hours they will ever face. Having worked in a high risk OB setting, I can offer a first hand account of caring for mothers whose babies, despite all efforts, did not survive. These mothers express their heartfelt gratitude to the medical team who gave all that they had to give to save the lives of their children, and when it became clear that there was no hope for survival, the womb became a sacred space, much like hospice care, where each child was treated with honor and dignity. Over and over we heard – “Thank you for trying, for supporting me, for caring so deeply for me and for my baby... all the way to the end.”

Words of affirmation offered from a health care professional to a mother in grief are perhaps the greatest and most lasting gift of all. Our recognition of her courage to do all that she could do to save her baby and our recognition of her enduring love, bring her a peace of mind that paves the way to a healthy path toward healing.

The bill under consideration is a step forward in the advancement of a promising and life saving arena of medicine. Providing information regarding APR is one more way we offer our patients all that we can give.