

April 10, 2006

Health Professions Quality Assurance  
WA State Dept of Health  
PO Box 47865  
Olympia, WA 98504-7865

To Whom It May Concern:

With this letter Cedar River Clinics is submitting a Health Professions Complaint Form.

We wish to inform you about the poor treatment that several people have received by various pharmacies in Washington State.

Cedar River Clinics provide abortion, birth control, and reproductive health services in Tacoma, Renton and Yakima. There are three incidents we wish to tell you about. They are fully described on the following page.

We are concerned that this type of poor treatment may be becoming a trend and for that reason we are alerting you. We wish to stop the trend before it gains momentum.

We are complaining because in each of the following situations, we believe the pharmacist displayed behavior that was biased, unprofessional, and unethical.

Furthermore, we believe that this mistreatment was directed at our staff person or our patient because they were associated with our clinics and our clinics provide abortion services.

Sincerely,

Beverly Whipple, Executive Director  
Cedar River Clinics  
Feminist Women's Health Center

14220 Interurban Ave S #140, Seattle, WA 98168  
206-267-2701 x1101, BeverlyW@CedarRiverClinics.org

On 11-29-05, a patient at our Yakima clinic attempted to fill a prescription at a Safeway Pharmacy in Yakima (205 N 4th Ave, Yakima) before she traveled to her home in Spokane. When she returned to the counter to pick up her prescription, the pharmacist or clerk asked her totally inappropriate questions based upon the prescription coming from our clinic (Cedar River Clinics). The prescription was for pre-natal vitamins and the woman at the prescription counter asked our patient if she was pregnant, why she had gone to Cedar River Clinics, and then refused to fill the prescription for prenatal vitamins telling our client she "didn't need them if she wasn't pregnant."

On 5-17-05, the Clinic Manager at that time in our Renton clinic, used email to write an incident report regarding our client's poor treatment at the Swedish outpatient pharmacy in Seattle. Here's what happened, in Sharon's words:

Today one of our client's asked us to call in her prescription for her post-insert meds to Swedish outpatient pharmacy 206-386-3784. The coordinator, called the prescription in to the number above and spoke with an efficient staff person who took down the prescription information. A few minutes later, this pharmacy person called us back and told us that she had found out who we were and she morally was unable to fill the prescription. We then asked for her name stating that we wanted to be sure not to speak with her if we call again in the future. Although reluctant she told us her name was Marianne. We hung up with Marianne, called the number back and got another woman who answered the phone, who said she was the pharmacist. We had the impression that this new person was aware there was a situation developing. We then repeated the prescription instructions, which the pharmacist took down. I believe the client ultimately got the prescription.

On 4-25-02, a staff person working at our Yakima clinic visited a pharmacy located in the Food Pavilion grocery (12 N. Fair in Yakima). She was there to find answers to a variety of questions to better serve our clients. She wanted to know (1) if the pharmacy carried emergency contraception, and (2) if they accepted Take Charge coupons to pay for birth control (including EC). She brought written materials to leave with the pharmacist if he or she wanted to know about how to bill for Take Charge or more about the difference between EC and the abortion pill.

When she asked if they carried Emergency Contraception, a male pharmacist gave her a long lecture about how people should be responsible for their actions, that if people have unprotected intercourse they need to accept the responsibility for a possible pregnancy, and what he thought about abortion. He became very agitated as he spoke.

His response was so unprofessional, unexpected, and hostile that our staff person left the store.

end of report