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Moore, other pro-lifers oppose abortion promotion during pandemic

by Tom Strode, posted Wednesday, March 25, 2020 (one month ago)

WASHINGTON (BP) -- Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore joined other pro-life leaders Tuesday (March 24) in urging public health officials to act to prevent the promotion of abortion during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and more than 50 other representatives of national or state organizations called for the action in a letter to Alex Azar, secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The letter, organized by pro-life group Susan B. Anthony List, said Planned Parenthood and other organizations are promoting and performing abortions while other elective procedures are being delayed. By discontinuing abortions, Planned Parenthood would make medical equipment that is in limited supply available as the coronavirus spreads in this country, protect women who may require care from an overtaxed health-care system after post-abortion complications and reduce the burden on emergency rooms, according to the letter.

"Life is sacred in every season, but that should be especially obvious in the midst of a public health crisis," Moore told Baptist Press in written comments. "We must take every measure necessary to prevent the spread of the virus, and that includes stopping Planned Parenthood from exploiting vulnerable communities in danger now from a potentially deadly virus on top of their already violent actions."



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In the letter, the pro-life leaders called for Azar and other officials "to use their broad emergency authority" during the pandemic to:

- Guarantee "emergency response funds" are not turned over to abortion providers;
- Call on abortion clinics to halt their work and contribute their personal protective equipment and other supplies to the fight against the coronavirus;
- Make sure telemedicine abortion does not increase and the federal restrictions on disbursing chemical/medical abortion are preserved;
- -- Maintain efforts to halt the illegal sale by mail of chemical/medical abortion;
- Publicize information for women that is both medically factual and helpful in opposition to the "inaccurate and exploitative messaging" from abortion organizations.

Telemedicine abortion involves a doctor holding a videoconference with a woman in a remote clinic and then dispensing an abortion drug to her.

In the letter, the pro-life leaders said Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers are committing "acts of manifest fear-mongering and self-interest. [T]hey are exploiting the anxiety of woman and couples by continuing to promote abortion" throughout the United States. The letter cited social media postings by several abortion rights advocates who have called for the federal government to suspend restrictions on chemical/medical abortions.

"While most of the country is taking extreme care and making real sacrifices to save lives, Planned Parenthood is doing the opposite -- defying lawful directives and continuing to put abortion and profits before health and safety," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony List, in a written statement. "Abortion is not health care."

Alex McGill Johnson, acting president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, accused the pro-life leaders of using the pandemic "to push their ideological agenda."

"Abortion is an essential and time-sensitive medical procedure. ... This is not the time for politicians or groups to advance their own agenda by taking advantage of a worldwide pandemic," she said in written remarks.

Planned Parenthood performed more than 345,000 abortions and received \$616.8 million in government grants and reimbursements, according to its 2019 annual report.

Several states have ordered a halt to all elective medical procedures during the pandemic. Ohio and Texas have both made it clear their orders include abortion.

On March 20, the office of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost wrote Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio in Cincinnati in response to a complaint that the clinic continued to perform abortions after the order was issued to ban elective procedures. "[Y]ou and your facility are ordered to immediately stop performing non-essential and elective surgical abortions," the letter said.

In addition to Moore and Dannenfels, others signing the letter to Azar were: Carol Tobias, president, National Right to Life; Jeanne Mancini, president, March for Life; Tony Perkins, president, Family Research Council; Roland Warren, president, Care Net; Shawn Carney, president, 40 Days for Life; Brian Fisher, president, Human Coalition; Donna Harrison, executive director, American Association of Pro-life Obstetricians and Gynecologists; Frank Pavone, national director, Priests for Life; Lila Rose, president, Live Action; Kristan Hawkins, president, Students for Life of America; and Tami Fitzgerald, executive director, North Carolina Values Coalition.

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