

September 13, 2016  
Legislative Commission on Surrogacy

Dear Commission Members,

I am writing today on behalf of the Midwest Center for Reproductive Health regarding business practices of fertility clinics. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend in person as patients are scheduled months in advance for procedures which will help them begin their families. I trust that many of you are parents, or grandparents, and understand just how important that is.

My name is Randle Corfman, PhD, MD and I am the Director and President of the Midwest Center for Reproductive Health, located in Maple Grove, Minnesota. I established this practice in 1992 with the primary mission of helping people not only from the metropolitan area, but also in relatively remote areas, build families. We have been serving patients diagnosed with infertility in Minnesota since 1992. Since our opening, we have served over 12,500 couples or individuals who are from Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Alaska, Montana, and Wisconsin. I have been blessed to provide onsite consultations in each of these states for nearly 25 years.

Infertility is far more common than most people realize. I would venture to guess that most of you have had family members or dear friends who face difficulties with conception, some that you are aware of and some that you are not. In fact, we have helped several members of the legislature have children. It is, of course, a very private and intimate problem. Our patients find us at the referral of their personal physician, other medical professionals or through their own networks of friends and family who may be familiar with our services. We also receive inquiries from patients who find us through searches on the Internet.

Also like any other specialty clinic, our facility and staff are subject to significant state and federal regulation. I am licensed by the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice and maintain my license in good standing to practice medicine in Minnesota, as well as in the other states in which I serve patients. Similarly, our nursing staff are licensed by the Minnesota Board of Nursing and subject to its oversight.

Our laboratory is a member of the American Association of Bioanalysts and the College of American Pathologists. Our laboratory and its staff are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which oversees over 250,000 labs nationwide under the Clinical Lab Improvement Amendments (CLIA), a federal law passed several decades ago to assure the public can be assured of quality laboratory services. Our IVF and clinical laboratories are accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP).

Clinic pregnancy outcomes are reported to the Centers for Disease Control and the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART). SART is the primary organization of professionals dedicated to the practice of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) in the United States.

Finally, unlike many other specialty clinics, our services are likely not covered by the health insurance of our patients. Some self-insured companies may provide fertility benefits while most do not. Many of our patients have no health insurance benefits for our services and must pay out-of-pocket for the care they receive. It is a common misconception, so to speak, that fertility treatment is something that only “rich people” undergo. To the contrary, the people we serve are not wealthy. They make tremendous sacrifices to have the opportunity to conceive. It is my feeling that our awareness of the financial and emotional stressors facing these patients keeps us vigilant of any waste or unnecessary testing. When they tell me, for example, that they are mortgaging the farm in order to conceive it helps us stay lean, honest and circumspect as we are honored to provide care for them. As a Kansas farmboy I know what mortgaging the farm means.

Again, I apologize for not being able to present this information in person. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Randle S. Corfman, PhD, MD