

# Man charged with fetal homicide accused of spiking drink

KAUKAUNA, Wis. – A Wisconsin man accused of causing his pregnant girlfriend's abortion by spiking her drink with RU-486 is being prosecuted under the Wisconsin fetal homicide law that classifies unborn children as potential crime victims.

Manishkumar Patel of Kaukauna, free on a \$750,000 cash bond, was awaiting a Jan. 30 preliminary hearing in Outagamie County.

"In charging Patel with attempted homicide, Outagamie County law enforcement is simply using common sense," said Peggy Hamill, state director of Pro-Life Wisconsin.

"All preborn children deserve equal protection under the law, without exception," she added. "Ironically, under Wisconsin law, if the woman had taken RU-486 by her own hand, there could be no charges. God willing, more law enforcement officials will work to protect the lives of preborn children in our state, wanted or unwanted."

"Without Wisconsin's fetal homicide law, there would be no basis on which to charge Patel in the death of the child," said Susan Armacost, legislative director of Wisconsin Right to Life, in a press release.

"As horrible as this situation is for the child's mother, she can at least be comforted by the fact that her child is recognized as a victim under the fetal homicide law and that the death of her child is a crime in Wisconsin," she said.

The mother of the unborn child in the case is Dr. Darshana Patel, a family physician from Kaukauna who is not related to the accused. Both Patels are from India; Patel is a common Indian name.

On Sept. 17, Manishkumar Patel allegedly gave Darshana Patel a drink spiked with RU-486. Although she did not ingest that drink because she said she noticed a powdery substance in it, police suspect he caused her miscarriage two weeks later and one she had 10 months earlier.

In November 2006, Manishkumar Patel gave her a glass of milk that he said contained saffron. The following morning, Darshana Patel became ill and miscarried her 14-week-old fetus. Her boyfriend denied any involvement in the death of the baby, later named Shankar by the mother.

Darshana Patel, who also has a 3-year-old son with Manishkumar Patel, sought help from Elizabeth Ministry of Kaukauna following her 2006 miscarriage.

Founded in 1991 by Jeannie Hannemann and the late Capuchin Father Kurt Gessner, Elizabeth Ministry provides support to women and their families who are dealing with pregnancy, birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, regret over an abortion, infant or child death, crisis or special needs, as well as adoption or fertility issues.

“We helped (Dr. Patel) by placing her baby in a proper burial vessel,” said Hannemann. “Shankar was the first baby in our chapel. Even though she is Hindu, she was comfortable in the chapel during a week of mourning. Our service was really from the mother’s heart. She asked questions about the Christian traditions. It was a beautiful witness about Jesus.”

While the legal ramifications of the allegations against Manishkumar Patel have drawn considerable media attention, Hannemann said she hopes the victims in the case remain in people’s hearts.

“I hope this story teaches people about the importance of giving respect, honor and dignity to children lost to miscarriages and, in this case, most likely a murder,” she told The Compass, newspaper of the Diocese of Green Bay.

Initially, the case was thought to be the first of its kind, but according to The Associated Press, a Virginia man was sentenced to prison for giving his girlfriend a drug that caused a miscarriage. However, the drug used in that case was not RU-486.