

Pro-lifers criticize new abortion clinic offering spa-type setting

By Catholic News Service

CHEVY CHASE, Md. (CNS) - Carafem, a new clinic in a Washington suburb that offers a spa-type setting for women seeking an abortion using RU-486, seems to be telling women "that abortion is not complicated at all," according to a commentary posted on National Right to Life's online news site.

"A woman wants one. A woman (or a girl) gets one. She moves on - and woe be to anyone who dares to disagree that having an abortion is essentially indistinguishable from a quick trip to the spa for a pedicure," Dave Andrusko, the pro-life organization's news editor, wrote.

Carafem is a clinic that opened March 30 just outside of Washington in Chevy Chase. According to The Washington Post, its owners have created a "'spa-like' experience for women with a very open and unabashed approach to pregnancy termination."

Carafem's website says it specializes in first-trimester abortions, up to about 10 weeks of pregnancy, using only the RU-486 medical abortion procedure. It charges \$400 for the procedure, about \$100 less than the average cost of a surgical abortion. The staff, led by board certified OB-GYNs, will "greet clients with warm teas, comfortable robes and a matter-of-fact attitude," the Post story said.

National Right to Life President Carol Tobias said in a statement that "abortion is not pleasant" and trying to "to put pretty wrappings around the procedure isn't going to make any difference."

RU-486 is a two-day regimen used to terminate early pregnancies by blocking the hormone progesterone needed to sustain a pregnancy. It involves two types of medication: RU-486 itself, which is mifepristone, and a prostaglandin, known as misoprostol, that stimulates uterine contractions and is taken two days later to expel the fetus.

Carafem staff will administer the first medication at the clinic to the client, who then will take the second part at home within a 72-hour period. If the Maryland clinic is successful, Carafem President Christopher Purdy told the Post he hopes to expand to other states.

In his commentary, Andrusko called Carafem "the latest extension of the hey-abortion-is-no-big-deal mantra."

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