WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 16 ARTICLE 2R

WV Legislature

§16-2R-1. Legislative findings.

The Legislature finds that the State of West Virginia has a legitimate interest in protecting unborn lives and prohibiting abortions in West Virginia except in the circumstances set forth in this article.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-2. Definitions.

The definitions set forth in this section are controlling for purposes of this article and of this code, irrespective of terms used in medical coding, notations, or billing documents. For purposes of this article:

“Abortion” means the use of any instrument, medicine, drug, or any other substance or device with intent to terminate the pregnancy of a patient known to be pregnant and with intent to cause the death and expulsion or removal of an embryo or a fetus. This term does not include the terms “intrauterine fetal demise” or “stillbirth” or “miscarriage” as defined in this section.

"Attempt to perform or induce an abortion" means an act or the omission of an act that, under the circumstances as the person so acting or omitting to act believes them to be, constitutes a substantial step in a course of conduct intended to culminate in an abortion.

“Born alive” means the complete expulsion or extraction of the fetus, at any stage of development, who after such expulsion or extraction breathes or has a beating heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, or definite movement of voluntary muscles, regardless of whether the umbilical cord has been cut, and regardless of whether the expulsion or extraction occurs as a result of natural or induced labor, cesarean section, or induced abortion.

“Commissioner” means the Commissioner of the Bureau for Public Health of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

“Contraception” or "contraceptive" means the prevention of pregnancy by interfering with the process of ovulation, fertilization, or implantation.

"Ectopic" means a fertilized egg which is developing outside the uterus, or a fertilized egg is developing within parts of the uterus where it cannot be viable, including a cervical, cornual, or cesarean section scar implantations.

"Embryo" means the developing human from the time of fertilization until the end of the eighth week of gestation.

"Fertilization" means the fusion of a human spermatozoon with a human ovum.

"Fetal tissue research" means tissue or cells obtained from a dead embryo or fetus after a miscarriage, abortion, or intrauterine fetal demise.

"Fetus" means the developing human in the postembryonic period from nine weeks after fertilization until birth.

“Licensed medical professional” means a person licensed under §30-3-1 *et seq.*, or §30-14-1 *et seq.*, of this code.

WV Legislature

"Implantation" means when a fertilized egg has attached to the lining of the wall of the uterus.

"Intrauterine fetal demise" or "stillbirth" means the unintended or spontaneous loss of a fetus after the 19th week of pregnancy.

"In vitro fertilization" means a procedure or procedures intended to improve fertility or prevent genetic problems and assist with conception.

"Medical emergency" means a condition or circumstance that so complicates the medical condition of a patient as to necessitate an abortion to avert serious risk of the patient's death or serious risk of substantial life-threatening physical impairment of a major bodily function, not including psychological or emotional conditions. This term includes a circumstance in which it is necessary to terminate a pregnancy of one or more fetuses to preserve the life of another fetus or fetuses. A condition is not deemed a medical emergency if based on a claim or diagnosis that the patient intends or may engage in conduct which results in the patient's death or in substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function.

"Miscarriage" means the unintended or spontaneous loss of an embryo or a fetus before the 20th week of pregnancy. This term includes the medical terms "spontaneous abortion," "missed abortion," and "incomplete abortion".

"Nonviable" means an embryo or a fetus has a lethal anomaly which renders it incompatible with life outside of the uterus.

"Partial-birth abortion" means an abortion performed on a live fetus after partial vaginal delivery.

"Pregnancy" means the period of gestation after which a fertilized egg has implanted in the wall of a uterus.

"Reasonable medical judgment" means a medical judgment that would be made by a licensed medical professional who is knowledgeable about the case and the treatment possibilities with respect to the medical conditions involved.

"Unemancipated minor" means a person younger than 18 years of age who is not, or has not been, married or judicially emancipated.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-3. Prohibition to perform an abortion.

(a) An abortion may not be performed or induced or be attempted to be performed or induced unless in the reasonable medical judgment of a licensed medical professional:

(1) The embryo or fetus is nonviable;

(2) The pregnancy is ectopic; or

(3) A medical emergency exists.

(b) The prohibition set forth in subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to an adult within the first 8 weeks of pregnancy if the pregnancy is the result of sexual assault, as defined in §61-8B-1 *et seq*. of this code, or incest, as defined in §61-8-12 of this code, and at least 48 hours prior to the abortion the patient has reported the sexual assault or incest to a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the complaint and provided the report to the licensed medical professional performing the abortion.

(c) The prohibition set forth in subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to a minor or an incompetent or incapacitated adult within the first 14 weeks of pregnancy if the pregnancy is the result of sexual assault, as defined in §61-8B-1 *et seq*. of this code, or incest, as defined in §61-8-12 of this code, and at least 48 hours prior to the abortion the patient has:

(1) A report of the sexual assault or incest has been made to law enforcement having jurisdiction to investigate the complaint; or

(2) The patient has obtained medical treatment for the sexual assault or incest or any injury related to the sexual assault or incest from a licensed medical professional or in a hospital, as defined in §16-5B-1 of this code, which is licensed by the Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources: *Provided*, That the licensed medical professional or hospital, as defined in §16-5B-1 of this code, which is licensed by the Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, and which performed or provided such medical treatment may not perform or provide the abortion arising from such sexual assault or incest.

(d) In all cases where a report of sexual assault or incest against a minor is made pursuant this subsection (c), the agency or person to whom the report is made shall report the sexual assault or incest to the Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations Unit of the West Virginia State Police within 48 hours.

(e) An abortion performed pursuant to this section may not use the partial birth abortion procedure.

(f) A surgical abortion performed or induced or attempted to be performed or induced pursuant to this section shall be in a hospital, as defined in §16-5B-1 of this code, which is

WV Legislature

licensed by the Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

(g) An abortion performed or induced or attempted to be performed or induced shall be performed by a licensed medical professional who has West Virginia hospital privileges.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-4. Not considered an abortion.

(a) Abortion does not include:

(1) A miscarriage;

(2) An intrauterine fetal demise or stillbirth;

(3) The use of existing established cell lines derived from aborted human embryos or fetuses;

(4) Medical treatment provided to a patient by a licensed medical professional that results in the accidental or unintentional injury or death of an embryo or a fetus;

(5) In vitro fertilization;

(6) Human fetal tissue research, when performed in accordance with Sections 498A and 498B of the PHS Act (42 U.S.C. 289g-1 and 289g-2) and 45 C.F.R. 46.204 and 46.206; or

(7) The prescription, sale, transfer, or use of contraceptive devices, instruments, medicines, or drugs.

(b) This article does not prevent the prescription, sale, or transfer of intrauterine contraceptive devices, other contraceptive devices, or other generally medically accepted contraceptive devices, instruments, medicines, or drugs for a patient who is not known to be pregnant and for whom the contraceptive devices, instruments, medicines, or drugs are prescribed, sold, or transferred solely for contraceptive purposes and not for the purpose of inducing or causing the termination of a known pregnancy.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-5. Requirements when an abortion is performed on an unemancipated minor.

(a) If an abortion is performed on an unemancipated minor under the circumstances set forth in §16-2R-3(a) of this code, the licensed medical professional or his or her agent shall provide notice to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor within 48 hours after the abortion is performed:

(1) Directly, in person, or by telephone to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor; or

(2) By certified mail addressed to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor at their usual place of residence, return receipt requested. The delivery shall be sent restricted delivery assuring that the letter is delivered only to the addressee. Time of delivery shall be deemed occur at 12:00 p.m. on the next day on which regular mail delivery takes place.

(b) If an abortion is performed on an unemancipated minor under the circumstances set forth in §16-2R-3(c) of this code, the licensed medical professional may not perform an abortion until notice of the pending abortion as required by this section is complete.

(1) A licensed medical professional or his or her agent may personally give notice directly, in person, or by telephone to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor. Upon delivery of the notice, 48 hours shall pass until the abortion may be performed.

(2) A licensed medical professional or his or her agent may provide notice by certified mail addressed to the parent, guardian, or custodian of the unemancipated minor at their usual place of residence, return receipt requested. The delivery shall be sent restricted delivery assuring that the letter is delivered only to the addressee. Time of delivery shall be deemed to occur at 12:00 p.m. on the next day on which regular mail delivery takes place. Forty-eight hours shall pass from the date and time of presumed delivery until the abortion may be performed.

(3) Notice may be waived if the person entitled to notice certifies in writing that he or she has been notified. Notice is waived if the certified mail is refused.

(4) An unemancipated minor who objects to the notice being given to a parent, guardian, or custodian may petition for a waiver of the notice to the circuit court of the county in which the unemancipated minor resides. The petition shall be filed under seal.

(5) The petition is not required to be in any specific form and shall be sufficient if it fairly sets forth the facts and circumstances of the matter, but at a minimum shall contain the following information:

(A) The age and educational level of the unemancipated minor;

WV Legislature

(B) The county in which the unemancipated minor resides; and

(C) A brief statement of the unemancipated minor's reason or reasons for the desired waiver of notification of the parent, guardian, or custodian of such unemancipated minor.

(6) A petition may not be dismissed nor may any hearing thereon be refused because of any actual or perceived defect in the form of the petition.

(7) The Supreme Court of Appeals is requested to prepare suggested form petitions and accompanying instructions and shall make the same available to the clerks of the circuit courts. The clerks shall make the form petitions and instructions available in the clerk's office.

(8) The proceedings held pursuant to this subsection shall be confidential and the court shall conduct the proceedings in camera. The court shall inform the unemancipated minor of her right to be represented by counsel. If the unemancipated minor desires the services of an attorney, an attorney shall be appointed to represent her, if the unemancipated minor advises the court under oath or affidavit that she is financially unable to retain counsel.

(9) The court shall conduct a hearing upon the petition forthwith, but may not exceed the next succeeding judicial day. The court shall render its decision immediately and enter its written order not later than 24 hours. All testimony, documents, evidence, petition, orders entered thereon and all records relating to the matter shall be sealed by the clerk and shall not be opened to any person except upon order of the court upon a showing of good cause.

(10) Notice as required by this subsection (b) shall be ordered waived by the court if the court finds either:

(A) That the unemancipated minor is sufficiently mature and informed to make the decision to proceed with the abortion independently and without the notification or involvement of her parent, guardian, or custodian; or

(B) That notification to the person or persons to whom notification would otherwise be required would not be in the best interest of the unemancipated minor.

(11) A confidential appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeals shall be available to any unemancipated minor to whom a court denies a petition under this subsection. An order authorizing an abortion without notification is not appealable.

(12) Filing fees are not required in any proceeding under this subsection.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-6. Reporting by licensed medical professionals regarding abortion.

Any abortion performed or induced in this state is subject to the reporting requirements of §16-5-22.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-7. Licensure action.

A licensed medical professional who knowingly and willfully performs, induces, or attempts to perform or induce an abortion, with the intent to violate the provisions of §16-2R-3 of this code, is subject to disciplinary action by his or her applicable licensing board. If the licensing board finds that the licensed medical professional has knowingly and willfully performed, induced, or attempted to perform or induce an abortion, with the intent to violate the provisions of §16-2R-3 of this code, the licensing board shall revoke medical professional's license.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-8. Protection of aborted fetuses born alive.

(a) Whenever a licensed medical professional performs or induces, or attempts to perform or induce an abortion and the child is born alive, the licensed medical professional shall:

(1) Exercise the same degree of reasonable medical judgment to preserve the life and health of the child in the same manner as the licensed medical professional would render to any child alive at birth of the same gestational age;

(2) Ensure that the child is immediately transported and admitted to an appropriate medical facility.

(b) Any licensed medical professional who knowingly and willfully violates subsection (a) of this section shall be considered to have breached the standard of care owed to patients and is subject to discipline from the appropriate licensure board for such conduct, including but not limited to loss of professional license to practice.

(c) Any person, not subject to subsection (a) of this section, who knowingly and willfully violates subsection (a) of this section is guilty of the unauthorized practice of medicine in violation of §30-3-13 of this code and, upon conviction thereof, is subject to the penalties contained in that section: *Provided*, That the provisions of this subsection (c) enacted during the third extraordinary session of the Legislature, 2022, shall be effective 90 days from passage.

(d) In addition to the penalties referenced in this section, a patient may seek any remedy otherwise available to the patient by applicable law.

(e) This section shall not be construed to subject any patient upon whom an abortion is performed or induced or attempted to be performed or induced to a criminal penalty for any violation of this section as a principal, accessory or accomplice, conspirator, or aider and abettor.

WV Legislature

§16-2R-9. Severability.

Severability as provided in §2-2-10(b)(7) of this code is applicable to this article: *Provided*, That if this entire article is judicially determined to be unconstitutional, then the provisions of §16-2F-1 *et seq*., §16-2I-1 *et seq*., 16-2M-1 *et seq*., §16-2O-1, §16-2P-1, §16-2Q-1, and §33-42-8 of this code shall become immediately effective: *Provided, however*, That if a provision or provisions of §16-2R-1 *et seq*. of this code are judicially determined to be unconstitutional, then the provisions of §16-2F-9, §16-2I-9, §16-2M-7, §16-2O-1(e), §16-2P-1(d), §16-2Q-1(m), and §33-42-8(d) of this code are not effective.

WV Legislature