

Abortion

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Cherice Felix, an OB-GYN at Planned Parenthood in West Palm Beach, said she left Tennessee after the state banned abortion and “watched that system fall apart piece by piece.”

“Each restriction, each ban, it opened the door to a new way of restricting communication between doctors and their patients in the exam room,” she said during a Zoom press conference for the Yes on 4 campaign. “It restricted the care that we could give our patients, and then eventually it just flat out banned it. So I now live and work here, and watching similar things happen here in the state of Florida, it’s really alarming.”

Five states, including Tennessee, have either enacted or are considering “abortion trafficking” laws. Such laws typically allow for criminal charges on an adult who is found to be “recruiting, harboring, or transporting” a minor to get an abortion, according to an Idaho law that was the first to go on the books.

In October, the Texas Supreme Court let stand a lower court decision that says hospitals are not required to provide emergency abortions.

Cases like this, along with the stories of two Georgia women whose deaths were linked to the state’s abortion ban, are frightening providers and especially patients, who have more questions now than they have fewer options.

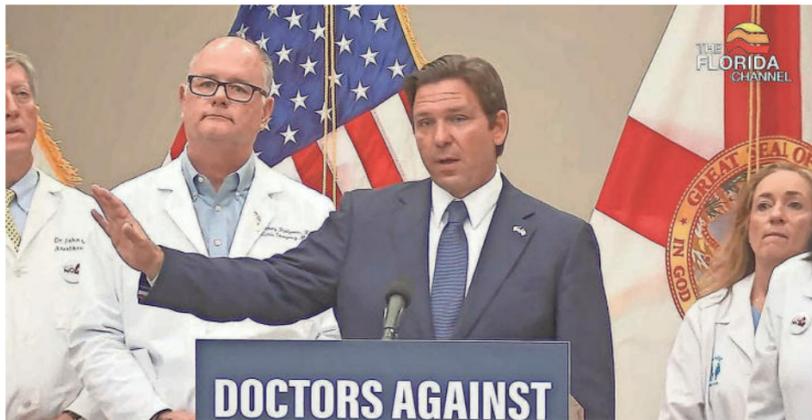
“They are hearing wild and crazy things on social media, some of which are absolutely true,” said Cheryl, a midwife who practices in North Florida, who asked to remain anonymous because of fear of professional repercussions.

During a routine third trimester checkup, one of her high risk patients came to her appointment with her husband and looked her in the eye and asked, “How are you going to decide if I have to die in order for the baby to live?”

Cheryl was stunned. “I said, ‘We’re taking the best care of you and your baby,’” she said, grateful it never came to that.

But critics of the amendment say such concerns are overblown.

Dr. Christina Peña, a Miami OB-GYN also with Florida Physicians Against Amendment 4, said at a Coral Gables event with DeSantis, “Do not believe the



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks against Amendment 4 alongside representatives from Florida Physicians Against Amendment 4 in Jacksonville on Oct. 22. PROVIDED BY THE FLORIDA CHANNEL

lie. Women are not dying across our state because of lack of access to abortion under our current laws.”

Few Florida options for women seeking abortions beyond six weeks

For women in Florida who don’t qualify under the exceptions and who seek to get an abortion after six weeks, there are few options. If the fetus’ gestational age is lower than 11 weeks, they can get abortion pills, mifepristone and misoprostol, through the mail.

“It’s better than the coat hanger days, but still, I wouldn’t want my daughter to take mifepristone unmonitored,” said Christie. These medications “are about as safe as you can get, but like any medication, there’s complications, so I would want supervision.”

Beyond 11 weeks, the pills may not be effective and could increase complications, Christie said. But women may still take the risk. Some already are.

“Did abortions happen prior to 1973? Of course, they happened. Did they happen completely safely? No, they did not. And that’s where we are at this point. We’re pre-1973,” said Christie.

That year, the U.S. Supreme Court determined the U.S. Constitution protected a women’s right to an abortion in Roe v. Wade. The current court tossed out that decision in June 2022, throwing the issue to the states.

Now, if a woman wants to travel for an abortion, she will have to spend thousands of dollars to get to Washing-

ton, D.C., or New York City, some of the closest places that allow abortion with the fewest barriers.

While North Carolina allows abortion up to 12 weeks, the 72-hour in-person waiting period makes it difficult for many to make the somewhat drivable distance for an appointment.

The next closest is Virginia, where abortion is banned in the third trimester. But it’s hard to find direct flights, the nearest abortion provider can be an hour from the airport and those clinics are already at capacity.

As previously reported by the USA TODAY Network-Florida, four out of the five organizations that provide monetary assistance for those seeking abortions in Florida say they have seen drastic increases in the number of callers and costs since May 1.

After abortion, some Florida doctors worry IVF is next

The way Christie talks about his patients is with a fierce defensiveness. He says they’ve already been through enough by the time they see him for fertility treatment, like in-vitro fertilization.

Which is where he thinks the state is going to go next if Amendment 4 doesn’t pass. “There’s no question. IVF is on the menu,” he said.

Here’s why: Some doctors worry that “heartbeat” bills could potentially affect embryos for IVF. For example, three states, including Georgia, have already enacted fetal personhood laws. In Geor-

gia, the 2022 LIFE Act states that “‘unborn child’ means a member of the species Homo sapiens at any stage of development who is carried in the womb.”

And earlier this year, Alabama’s Supreme Court ruled that frozen embryos are legally protected as children, which shut down IVF clinics across the state and rushed that state’s legislature into fast tracking a law to backpeddle the decision.

McCarus, who opposes Amendment 4, said she doesn’t believe Florida will go “extreme” and outlaw IVF, however.

“Cooler heads and medical scientists probably prevailed in that (Alabama) decision, so I’m actually relieved that that happened,” she said.

Yet earlier this year, a fetal personhood bill, Civil Liability for the Wrongful Death of an Unborn Child (SB 476), was filed by Sen. Erin Grall, R-Fort Pierce, the sponsor of the Heartbeat Protection Act. The bill, which never made it out of the Florida Senate Rules Committee, defined “unborn child” as “a member of the species Homo sapiens, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb.”

This September, the governor’s Faith and Community Initiative hosted an event with Attorney General Ashley Moody and Mat Staver, the founder and chairman of the Liberty Counsel, called “Your Legal Rights & Amendment 4’s Ramifications.”

When the Alabama legislature passed the IVF protection law, Staver called it a “knee-jerk reaction.”

“It is too bad legislators are moved more by political winds than in science and in the fundamental issues involving human life,” Staver said. “Every human life begins as an embryo and has incalculable worth. Yet this law presents a double standard treating IVF embryos differently by removing their legal protections.”

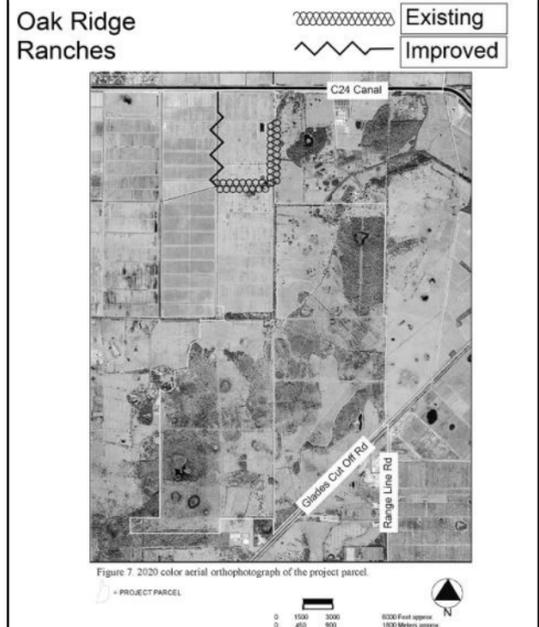
Every day, Christie has at least one patient who asks him if their embryos are safe in Florida, and their worries aren’t unfounded, he said.

“I’m out of the game of guessing what this current Legislature is capable of. Because if you’d asked me two years ago, three years ago, would this be a conversation I would ever be having? Absolutely not,” he said.

Ana Goñi-Lessan, state watchdog reporter for the USA TODAY Network – Florida, can be reached at agonilesan@gannett.com.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA NOTICE OF INTENT TO EXCHANGE PROPERTY

Pursuant to Section 125.37, Florida Statutes, the Board of County Commissioners for St. Lucie County, Florida hereby gives notice of its intent to consider a Resolution to approve the exchange of the release of the County’s interest in a certain drainage Easement (“Existing Drainage Easement”) in return for a new drainage easement owned by Oak Ridge Resi Investments, LLC (“New Drainage Easement”) at its regularly held meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as may be heard. The locations of the Current Drainage Easement and the New Drainage Easement are depicted on the attached map.



The terms and conditions of the proposed exchange are that the County release its interest in the Existing Drainage Easement in return for Oak Ridge Resi Investments, LLC’s conveyance to the County of the New Drainage Easement, free and clear of all liens and encumbrances, except taxes for 2024, and applicable zoning.

Copies of the proposed Resolution may be obtained from the County Attorney’s Office, St. Lucie County Administration Building Annex, 2300 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, Florida, 34982.

THIS NOTICE EXECUTED AND DATED THIS 24th day of October, 2024.

Daniel S. McIntyre
County Attorney

TR-40550913

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED CHANGE TO PERMITTED USES

Mattamy Palm Beach, LLC, proposes the adoption of the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA, REGARDING AMENDING ARTICLE 11, PLANNED MIXED-USE VILLAGE, DIVISION 1, GENERAL PROVISIONS, DIVISION 3, TRANSECT ZONES, DIVISION 4, STANDARDS FOR LOTS AND BUILDINGS, DIVISION 5, THOROUGHFARE STANDARDS, DIVISION 6, SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, DIVISION 7, DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES, LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, MARTIN COUNTY CODE; PROVIDING FOR APPLICABILITY, CONFLICTING PROVISIONS, SEVERABILITY, FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

A public hearing on the ordinance will be held before the Martin County Board of County Commissioners on November 12, 2024, to consider the adoption of the ordinance which changes the permitted uses within the Planned Mixed Village. The hearing will be conducted beginning at 7:00 PM., or as soon thereafter as the following item may be heard.

All interested persons are invited to attend and be heard. The meeting will be held in the Martin County Commission Chambers, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996. Written comments may be mailed to Paul Schilling, Director, Martin County Growth Management Department, 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996. Copies of the item will be available from the Growth Management Department. For more information, contact the Growth Management Department at (772) 288-5495.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding are entitled, at no cost, to the provision of certain assistance. This does not include transportation to and from the meeting. Please contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at (772) 320-3131, or the Office of the County Administrator at (772) 288-5400, or in writing to 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL, 34996, no later than three days before the hearing date. Persons using a TTY device, please call 711 Florida Relay Services.

If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at the meetings or hearings of any board, committee, agency, council, or advisory group, that person will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record should include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

TR-40548714

Notice of Community Meeting and Public Hearings for Proposed Brownfield Area Designation Pursuant to Florida’s Brownfields Redevelopment Act

Representatives for 9670 Marine Way, LLC, will hold a community meeting on November 5, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. until not later than 7:00 p.m., at the Courtyard by Marriott Stuart, 7615 SW Lost River Road, Stuart, FL 34997. This community meeting will be held for the purpose of affording interested parties the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions about the potential designation of land located approximately at 9670 SW Marine Way, Martin County, Florida, identified by Folio Number 13-39-40-000-004-00020-5, as a Brownfield Area. This Community Meeting will also address future development and rehabilitation activities planned for the site.

The designation is being made pursuant to Section 376.80, Florida Statutes, of Florida’s Brownfield Redevelopment Act, and will involve a public hearing, date to be announced, before the Martin County Board of Commissioners and a second public hearing, date to be announced, to be held in the Commission Chambers at 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, FL 34996.

For more information regarding the community meeting and/or the public hearings or to provide comments and suggestions regarding designation, development, or rehabilitation at any time before or after the community meeting and/or public hearings, please contact Brett C. Brumund, Esq., who can be reached by telephone at (305) 640-5300, U.S. Mail at The Goldstein Environmental Law Firm, P.A., 2100 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Suite 710, Coral Gables, FL 33134, and/or email at bbrumund@goldsteinenvlaw.com.

TR-40548347