ENSURE ACCURATE MEDICAL INFORMATION AT CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS (CPCS) – passed with removal of term CPC

RESOLVED, That the AAFP urge federal, state, and local governments to support only the programs that provide medically accurate information to women facing unintended pregnancies and to enforce existing consumer protection laws prohibiting deceptive practices.

9-2011 COD REFERENCE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The committee heard extensive testimony on this resolution. Members who supported the resolution stated that information provided to women at these centers was inaccurate. They also indicated their belief that the centers provided support to women only during the pregnancy and not after the baby was born. Some members said that physicians should always support provisions of evidence-based medicine and that information on the mental health effects of abortion was unsubstantiated. Finally, several members stated that the resolution was more of an issue for the states rather than for the federal government.

Members opposing the resolution said that the clinics provided a valuable service and that, in particular, they disagreed with the second half of the resolved clause referring to bias and deceptive practices. One witness stated that organizations such as Planned 1 Parenthood also could be said to be providing biased information to pregnant women since organizations hold varying perspectives on this issue. Another witness said that pregnant women should be informed about recent information from The British Journal of Psychiatry indicating an increased risk for mental health problems following an abortion. Finally, members spoke of the primary care and well-child care provided by some of the centers to pregnant women and children.

The committee discussed this resolution at length. They agreed that ideally, maternity care should be provided by a family physician who would provide comprehensive and continuing care. Members also acknowledged their understanding of the desire of the resolution’s authors to oppose deceptive practices, and the opponents’ strong belief that the centers played an important role for some pregnant women. Ultimately, committee members determined that the AAFP’s role was to support the provision of medically accurate information, regardless of venue. Members also felt it was important to state that any existing consumer protection laws should be enforced. Consequently, they agreed to a substitute resolution including these two principles.