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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Neal Mohan
Google LLC, D/B/A YouTube
901 Cherry Ave.
San Bruno, CA 94066

Re: Misleading Abortion Notice on YouTube Videos

Mr. Mohan,

It is never appropriate for technology companies to mislead consumers. One of our country's most cherished traditions is the freedom to speak and express ourselves in the marketplace of ideas. As Americans increasingly rely on the internet and social media, we have repeatedly urged technology companies, including Alphabet, to operate in the spirit of honesty and transparency. When websites like YouTube add objectively untruthful information to videos, that risks deceiving consumers. That is why we, the undersigned Attorneys General of Iowa, Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming write to you today.

We are disappointed to see your platform suppress pro-life and pro-woman messages by distorting them with false information. Less than two years ago, more than a dozen states [warned Alphabet's CEO](#) that Google must not discriminate against pro-life pregnancy resource centers in its search results, advertising, and other products. Soon after, [Yelp discriminated against these same centers](#) by posting a misleading "consumer notice" on the centers' business pages. Attorneys general from twenty-four states demanded that Yelp remove the misleading notices.

Now, YouTube is following that unfortunate trend and has added its own misleading "information panel" to videos about abortion. Your notice contains false information about a central issue in a case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. It also misleads women seeking information about abortion drugs, potentially endangering their lives. We demand that you remove or correct the notice immediately.

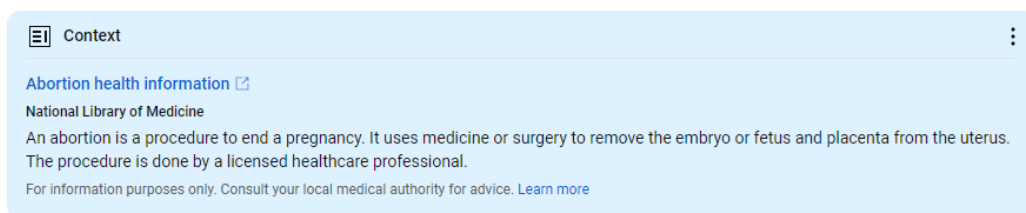
Later this month, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in [Food & Drug Administration v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine](#), a case challenging the FDA's decision to eliminate health and safety measures for women who take abortion drugs. Among other protections, the FDA eliminated the

requirement that a doctor care for the pregnant woman in person before, during, and after a chemical abortion. Doctors sued the FDA for violating federal law by removing that and other commonsense safeguards for women.

To educate the public on these drugs' serious side effects and the consequences of their in-home use, Alliance Defending Freedom [published a video](#) of a woman describing her excruciating experience of inducing a chemical abortion at home alone, without a doctor or nurse present. Sadly, [her story](#) is not unique among women who take abortion drugs.



YouTube nevertheless added to the video a notice that minimizes and downplays some of the serious risks of abortion drugs. The notice states: “An abortion is a procedure to end a pregnancy. It uses medicine or surgery to remove the embryo or fetus and placenta from the uterus. ***The procedure is done by a licensed healthcare professional.***”



The last sentence of the notice is both false and misleading. It suggests that chemical abortions are performed by trained professionals. They are not. Although surgical abortions are still typically “done by a licensed healthcare

professional,” under current FDA protocols chemical abortions are “done by” pregnant women themselves.

YouTube’s false notice is not supported by any reliable source. The [National Library of Medicine](#) webpage to which the notice links does not discuss who performs abortion procedures, let alone state that licensed healthcare professionals do. No surprise—because if that page said so, it would be a lie. In a [chemical abortion](#), the pregnant woman, rather than a doctor or nurse, induces the abortion by taking two drugs, mifepristone and misoprostol. She can take those drugs with her, taking them in her house, her apartment, or even in her dorm room—unaccompanied by a healthcare professional of any kind.

This very lack of physician involvement is central to the doctors’ lawsuit in *FDA v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine*. [Before 2016](#), the FDA required mifepristone and misoprostol to be prescribed and administered only by physicians and only in a healthcare setting, requirements that mitigate the serious risks these drugs pose to women. The FDA now allows women to receive these drugs from non-physicians through the mail and to self-administer them, all without ever seeing a physician or other healthcare professional [in person](#). The doctors in *Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine* are challenging that unsafe process.

Chemical abortion is the [most common abortion method in the country](#), and women deserve to know the truth about these high-risk drugs that send, according to the FDA’s own label, roughly one in 25 women who take them to the emergency room. By asserting that chemical abortions are performed by licensed healthcare professionals, YouTube lies to our constituents and the rest of the American public. That lie is especially concerning because it inaccurately portrays a fact central to a current Supreme Court case.

We expect YouTube will recognize the serious harm its notice poses and promptly remove or correct it. If it does not, we will need to exercise our consumer-protection authority to protect pregnant women and other consumers from your falsehoods. We also note that, by editing and posting the false warning label itself, YouTube has no immunity under [Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act](#).

We demand that YouTube immediately remove or correct the misleading “information panel” posted on Alliance Defending Freedom’s video and other videos discussing chemical abortion. Your bias against pro-life and pro-woman

messages is un-American; inconsistent with the liberties protected by the First Amendment; and, in this case, illegal. It must stop.

Sincerely,



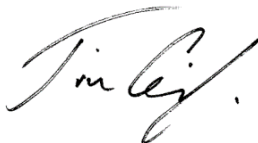
Brenna Bird
Attorney General of Iowa



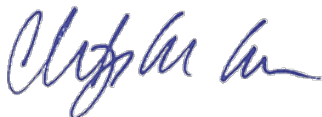
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