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Philadelphia physicians failed to report dangerous peer

Many women who went to Dr. Kermit Gosnell to end their pregnancies came away with life-threatening infections and punctured organs; some still had fetal parts inside them when they arrived at the ER of nearby hospitals. Though physicians at the University of Pennsylvania Health System, which operates two hospitals within a mile of the West Philadelphia abortion clinic, saw at least six of these patients — two of whom died — they failed to report their peer's incompetence, according to a grand jury report.

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"We are very troubled that almost all of the doctors who treated these women routinely failed to report a fellow physician who was so obviously endangering his patients," wrote the Philadelphia grand jurors, who recommended a slew of charges against Gosnell and his staff in January.

The health system - in apparent contradiction of the grand jury report - released a statement saying that it had "provided reports to the authorities regarding patients of Dr. Gosnell who sought additional care at our hospitals" starting in 1999. However, attorneys for the health system could only produce a single report for the grand jury.

The grand jury also criticized Pennsylvania's health and medical regulators for taking no action against Gosnell, despite reports that he was harming patients. But the panel also said too many local physicians had shirked their professional and legal responsibilities to report him and thus protect the lives of future clinic patients.

Pennsylvania law requires doctors to report abortion complications to the state Health Department. And the American Medical Association says "physicians have an ethical obligation to report impaired, incompetent and unethical colleagues."

Prosecutors described Gosnell's clinic as "a house of horrors," where viable babies were killed with scissors, fetal remains were kept in jars and freezers, and dirty medical equipment was operated by unlicensed, often untrained and unsupervised employees. Gosnell himself was never certified in obstetrics and gynecology, only family practice.

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Gosnell, 70, is jailed without bail and charged with eight counts of murder in the deaths of one patient and seven viable babies. Authorities say he also routinely maimed his clients, sometimes leaving them sterile and near death.

Source: [Associated Press](#)

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