

A Miscarrying Woman Was Denied Medication Because of “Conscience”

By Amanda Marcotte



“See, it says right here that my conscience prohibits you from obtaining this prescription.”

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Earlier this month, **in my piece about the Purvi Patel “feticide” case in Indiana**, I predicted increased harassment of women who are miscarrying, on the suspicion that they're trying to obtain misoprostol to induce abortions. (Because the drug expels the contents of the uterus, misoprostol can be used both in abortions and to **treat incomplete miscarriages**.) That day has come already to Milledgeville, Georgia, where **Brittany Cartrett claims that a pharmacist refused to fill a prescription** for misoprostol that her doctor prescribed for her miscarriage.

Cartrett explains on her Facebook page:

After discussion with my Doctor, we decided to go the less invasive route and choose a medicine that I could take at home to help miscarry naturally, especially since my body wants to hold on to the little miracle. I get a phone call from the doctor stating that the #Walmart in Milledgeville, GA (yes the one I used to work at) doesn't feel comfortable with filling this prescription. She was going to call and figure out what is going on and call me back. Well about 5 minutes later she calls and says, "They won't fill it. They won't tell me why. But they won't fill it." So we find another place to fill it and I thank her.They WON'T fill it. Not that they CAN'T. But they WON'T. Now, I have another prescription there that I have to get. So I go up to Walmart and I get my prescription and the #Walmart pharmacist comes to me for my consultation and asks if I have any questions. I tell her yes, but not about this one. I ask her why they refused to fill the other prescription I had. She looks at me, over her nose and says "Because I couldn't think of a reason why you would need that prescription." Excuse me?! I tell her my reasons for needing it, and she says "Well, I don't feel like there is a reason why you would need it, so we refused to fill it."

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WGXA followed up with Walmart and found pharmacist Sandip Patel, “who said he was aware of the situation and also said that pharmacists have the ability to turn down prescriptions at their own discretion.” Georgia law has broad provisions allowing pharmacists to refuse service based on “conscience.”

Abortion-inducing medications are troubling for the anti-choice movement, because they blur the biological difference between miscarriage and abortion; many miscarriages are only resolved through the very same interventions used to terminate pregnancies at will. As Cartrett's alleged experiences suggest, the blurring creates suspicion. Appointing a bunch of busybody pharmacists as informal judges over whether you are emptying your uterus for the right reasons is a terrible idea that only compounds the pain of a miscarriage. But it's unavoidable if we continue taking away women's discretion over their own pregnancies—even when those pregnancies are over.

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