



May-June 2020

# Pro-Life News

Maryland State Council  
Knights of Columbus



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## The COVID-19 Crisis and an Abortion-Promoting Opportunity

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic 21 state attorneys general, including Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh, sent a letter on March 30 to the heads of the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, asking the FDA to remove or ease the abortion requirements under its Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS). Specifically, they requested that restrictions on mifepristone (RU-486) be lifted, which would allow access to mail-order and telemedicine abortions.

Two weeks later, on April 14, a letter signed by 38 pro-life U.S. Senators and 121 Members of the House of Representatives urged the FDA to "robustly enforce the REMS for medication abortion and end dangerous runarounds of these protections under the guise of medical research." They called for the enforcement of REMS concerning the mifepristone abortion drug process. Congressman Andy Harris was the only signer from Maryland.

Congress members also requested that the FDA conduct oversight into ongoing studies to remotely dispense abortion pills to women in violation of FDA safety requirements, including Gynuity's TelAbortion project, which is being conducted in 13 states including Maryland. This effort is "transmuting into a national policy, without adequate evaluation or oversight."

As part of the COVID-19 response, Gov. Larry Hogan signed into law emergency legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly that removes restrictions on remote prescriptions, but fails to distinguish between life-saving and death-inducing drugs. For more information, check with Maryland Right to Life at [info@mdrtl.org](mailto:info@mdrtl.org) or call 410-269-6397.

## Care Net of Southern Maryland Responds During Lockdown

When Gov. Hogan's Executive Order closed all public places in Maryland and Care Net Pregnancy Center of Southern Maryland had to shutter its doors, it began delivering free baby supplies (diapers, wipes, baby food, and formula) to mothers in need. From March 24 to April 22, Care Net served 200 families throughout Southern Maryland. Kudos to the staff for their dedication and innovation.

During the pandemic, more women than ever are searching online for the word "abortion" and ending up in contact with pregnancy care centers. In the past month, it has happened 244 times for the folks at the center.

Care Net postponed its annual banquet, moving it from March 26 to September 10, 2020. All the details for the event remain the same, with Melissa Ohden as keynote speaker. This change is having a significant impact on the center's finances, for the banquet provides 27% of its annual operating budget of \$70,000 for its three locations; and, banquet-related expenses of \$12,500 had already been incurred. But they carry on.

The baby bottle campaign also had to be rethought. This year, instead of distributing the bottles at churches, the center has asked people to find a container in their home, put change in it through Father's Day and the center will have it picked up. Where there is a will, there is a way.

## With Restrictions Easing

The **40 Days for Life** group that normally prays outside of the Metropolitan Family Planning Clinic in College Park expects to resume its activities on the second Saturday of each month starting in June. There will be the Rosary, psalms and liturgical songs from 10 am to 2 pm. For more information, contact Mike Turek at [Michaelturek@aol.com](mailto:Michaelturek@aol.com) or 301-518-8920.

The **Defend Life** prayer group that witnesses near LeRoy Carhart's abortion facility at Wildwood Plaza in Bethesda is resuming its weekly gathering, each Monday morning 9-11 am. For more information, contact Dick Retta at [dickretta61@verizon.net](mailto:dickretta61@verizon.net) or call 301-538-2500.

The leadership at **Pregnancy Support Center of Carroll County** (formerly Tender Care) in Westminster has changed. Jodi O'Connell has stepped down after 7-1/2 years of dedicated service and has been replaced by Laura Diem Wolf as interim director. Thank you for your service, Jodi!

## Hagerstown Woman Threatened by Police for Praying at Abortion Center

On April 2, Wanda King and several other pro-life advocates were prayerfully witnessing outside of the Hagerstown Reproductive Health abortion facility. Several police officers approached and threatened them with a \$5,000 fine and ordered them to leave the location. They were accused of violating the "stay home order" even though they were maintaining social distancing. One member of the group informed Maryland State Delegate Neil Parrott, who then made an inquiry about the matter to the Governor's Task Force. He was informed that the pro-life individuals in Hagerstown could be outside the abortion clinic within due limits. This information was emailed to the Hagerstown Police Chief, who did not respond despite three follow-up emails.

Five days later, King and one other pro-lifer were again outside of the abortion facility. Three Hagerstown police officers approached King while she was standing approximately 15 feet from her colleague on the sidewalk near the abortion clinic. She again was threatened with a \$5,000 fine for allegedly violating Maryland's "stay home order." As a policeman prepared to issue her a citation, a friend of King arrived to pick her up and she left.

The Thomas More Society has come to her defense, with its attorneys demanding that the city confirm immediately in writing that Wanda King and her colleagues may return to their peaceful activities outside of the abortion facility without fear of arrest or citation. They pointed out the selective enforcement of the Maryland Stay Home Order, as the Hagerstown abortion clinic continues to operate with impunity despite a ban on all elective surgeries. For more information, go to <https://www.thomasmoresociety.org/maryland-pro-life-advocates-harassed-as-hagerstown-police-selectively-enforce-stay-at-home-orders/>

## Maryland's KofC Ultrasound Program

The **Center for Pregnancy Concerns** is completing renovations on its new location on North Howard Street in Baltimore, directly next to Planned Parenthood's facility. If you have a favorite scripture quotation that you would like inscribed on the beams, framing or subflooring of the building, contact Gina Ruppert at [gina@centerforpregnancyconcerns.org](mailto:gina@centerforpregnancyconcerns.org) or 410-391-6699 by June 2. Although it will not be visible, you will know that the Lord's Word is at the foundation of the center's work.

For information about the ultrasound program or to make a donation, contact Lawrence Grayson at [LPGrayson@verizon.net](mailto:LPGrayson@verizon.net).

## Cemeteries of the Innocents

As of May 1, there are no Cemeteries of the Innocents standing in Maryland. The lockdown in response to the pandemic has stopped all new installations. The four that were standing before the crisis began were taken down after several months. They now are available for reinstallation. Will your council host one? For more information or to schedule an installation, contact Jim McFillin at [jimmcfillin@cs.com](mailto:jimmcfillin@cs.com).

**Cemetery of the Innocents Scorecard: Number Installed in 2020 – 4 Since 2004 – 337**

*"A world at prayer is a world at peace"* – Ven. Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.

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