

## 1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend and reenact § 18.2-76 of the Code of Virginia, relating to ultrasound requirement as*  
 3 *part of informed consent for abortion.*

4 [H 462]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**7 **1. That § 18.2-76 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

8 § 18.2-76. Informed written consent required; civil penalty.

9 A. Before performing any abortion or inducing any miscarriage or terminating a pregnancy as  
 10 provided in §§ 18.2-72, 18.2-73 or § 18.2-74, the physician shall obtain the informed written consent of  
 11 the pregnant woman. However, if the woman has been adjudicated incapacitated by any court of  
 12 competent jurisdiction or if the physician knows or has good reason to believe that such woman is  
 13 incapacitated as adjudicated by a court of competent jurisdiction, then only after permission is given in  
 14 writing by a parent, guardian, committee, or other person standing in loco parentis to the woman, may  
 15 the physician perform the abortion or otherwise terminate the pregnancy.

16 B. *At least 24 hours before the performance of an abortion, a qualified medical professional trained*  
 17 *in sonography and working under the supervision of a physician licensed in the Commonwealth shall*  
 18 *perform fetal transabdominal ultrasound imaging on the patient undergoing the abortion for the purpose*  
 19 *of determining gestational age. If the pregnant woman lives at least 100 miles from the facility where*  
 20 *the abortion is to be performed, the fetal ultrasound imaging shall be performed at least two hours*  
 21 *before the abortion. The ultrasound image shall contain the dimensions of the fetus and accurately*  
 22 *portray the presence of external members and internal organs of the fetus, if present or viewable.*  
 23 *Determination of gestational age shall be based upon measurement of the fetus in a manner consistent*  
 24 *with standard medical practice in the community for determining gestational age. When only the*  
 25 *gestational sac is visible during ultrasound imaging, gestational age may be based upon measurement of*  
 26 *the gestational sac. If gestational age cannot be determined by a transabdominal ultrasound, then the*  
 27 *patient undergoing the abortion shall be verbally offered other ultrasound imaging to determine*  
 28 *gestational age, which she may refuse. A print of the ultrasound image shall be made to document the*  
 29 *measurements that have been taken to determine the gestational age of the fetus.*

30 *The provisions of this subsection shall not apply if the woman seeking an abortion is the victim of*  
 31 *rape or incest, if the incident was reported to law enforcement authorities. Nothing herein shall preclude*  
 32 *the physician from using any ultrasound imaging that he considers to be medically appropriate pursuant*  
 33 *to the standard medical practice in the community.*

34 C. *The qualified medical professional performing fetal ultrasound imaging pursuant to subsection B*  
 35 *shall verbally offer the woman an opportunity to view the ultrasound image, receive a printed copy of*  
 36 *the ultrasound image and hear the fetal heart tones pursuant to standard medical practice in the*  
 37 *community, and shall obtain from the woman written certification that this opportunity was offered and*  
 38 *whether or not it was accepted and, if applicable, verification that the pregnant woman lives at least*  
 39 *100 miles from the facility where the abortion is to be performed. A printed copy of the ultrasound*  
 40 *image shall be maintained in the woman's medical record at the facility where the abortion is to be*  
 41 *performed for the longer of (i) seven years or (ii) the extent required by applicable federal or state law.*

42 D. For purposes of this section:

43 "Informed written consent" means the knowing and voluntary written consent to abortion by a  
 44 pregnant woman of any age, without undue inducement or any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, or  
 45 other form of constraint or coercion by the physician who is to perform the abortion or his agent. The  
 46 basic information to effect such consent, as required by this subsection, shall be provided by telephone  
 47 or in person to the woman at least 24 hours before the abortion by the physician who is to perform the  
 48 abortion, by a referring physician, or by a licensed professional or practical nurse working under the  
 49 direct supervision of either the physician who is to perform the abortion or the referring physician;  
 50 however, the information in subdivision 5 may be provided instead by a licensed health-care  
 51 professional working under the direct supervision of either the physician who is to perform the abortion  
 52 or the referring physician. This basic information shall include:

53 1. A full, reasonable and comprehensible medical explanation of the nature, benefits, and risks of and  
 54 alternatives to the proposed procedures or protocols to be followed in her particular case;

55 2. An instruction that the woman may withdraw her consent at any time prior to the performance of  
 56 the procedure;

57 3. An offer for the woman to speak with the physician who is to perform the abortion so that he  
58 may answer any questions that the woman may have and provide further information concerning the  
59 procedures and protocols;

60 4. A statement of the probable gestational age of the fetus at the time the abortion is to be performed  
61 *and that fetal ultrasound imaging shall be performed prior to the abortion to confirm the gestational*  
62 *age;* and

63 5. An offer to review the printed materials described in subsection ~~D~~ F. If the woman chooses to  
64 review such materials, they shall be provided to her in a respectful and understandable manner, without  
65 prejudice and intended to give the woman the opportunity to make an informed choice and shall be  
66 provided to her at least 24 hours before the abortion or mailed to her at least 72 hours before the  
67 abortion by first-class mail or, if the woman requests, by certified mail, restricted delivery. This offer for  
68 the woman to review the material shall advise her of the following: (i) the Department of Health  
69 publishes printed materials that describe the unborn child and list agencies that offer alternatives to  
70 abortion; (ii) medical assistance benefits may be available for prenatal care, childbirth and neonatal care,  
71 and that more detailed information on the availability of such assistance is contained in the printed  
72 materials published by the Department; (iii) the father of the unborn child is liable to assist in the  
73 support of her child, even in instances where he has offered to pay for the abortion, that assistance in  
74 the collection of such support is available, and that more detailed information on the availability of such  
75 assistance is contained in the printed materials published by the Department; ~~and~~ (iv) she has the right  
76 to review the materials printed by the Department and that copies will be provided to her free of charge  
77 if she chooses to review them; *and (v) a statewide list of public and private agencies and services that*  
78 *provide ultrasound imaging and auscultation of fetal heart tone services free of charge.* Where the  
79 woman has advised that the pregnancy is the result of a rape, the information in clause (iii) ~~above~~  
80 be omitted.

81 The information required by this subsection may be provided by telephone ~~without conducting a~~  
82 ~~physical examination of or tests upon the woman, in which case the information required to be provided~~  
83 ~~may be based on facts supplied by the woman and whatever other relevant information is reasonably~~  
84 ~~available to the physician. If a physical examination, tests or the availability of other information to the~~  
85 ~~physician or the nurse subsequently indicates, in the medical judgment of the physician or the nurse, a~~  
86 ~~revision of the information previously supplied to the woman, that revised information may be~~  
87 ~~communicated to the woman at any time prior to the performance of the abortion or in person.~~

88 ~~C~~ E. The physician need not obtain the informed written consent of the woman when the abortion is  
89 to be performed pursuant to a medical emergency *or spontaneous miscarriage*. "Medical emergency"  
90 means any condition which, on the basis of the physician's good faith clinical judgment, so complicates  
91 the medical condition of a pregnant woman as to necessitate the immediate abortion of her pregnancy to  
92 avert her death or for which a delay will create a serious risk of substantial and irreversible impairment  
93 of a major bodily function.

94 ~~D~~ F. On or before October 1, 2001, the Department of Health shall publish, in English and in each  
95 language which is the primary language of two percent or more of the population of the  
96 Commonwealth, the following printed materials in such a way as to ensure that the information is easily  
97 comprehensible:

98 1. Geographically indexed materials designed to inform the woman of public and private agencies  
99 and services available to assist a woman through pregnancy, upon childbirth and while the child is  
100 dependent, including, but not limited to, information on services relating to (i) adoption as a positive  
101 alternative, (ii) information relative to counseling services, benefits, financial assistance, medical care  
102 and contact persons or groups, (iii) paternity establishment and child support enforcement, (iv) child  
103 development, (v) child rearing and stress management, ~~and~~ (vi) pediatric and maternal health care, *and*  
104 *(vii) public and private agencies and services that provide ultrasound imaging and auscultation of fetal*  
105 *heart tone services free of charge.* The materials shall include a comprehensive list of the names and  
106 telephone numbers of the agencies, or, at the option of the Department of Health, printed materials  
107 including a toll-free, 24-hour-a-day telephone number which may be called to obtain, orally, such a list  
108 and description of agencies in the locality of the caller and of the services they offer;

109 2. Materials designed to inform the woman of the probable anatomical and physiological  
110 characteristics of the human fetus at two-week gestational increments from the time when a woman can  
111 be known to be pregnant to full term, including any relevant information on the possibility of the fetus's  
112 survival and pictures or drawings representing the development of the human fetus at two-week  
113 gestational increments. Such pictures or drawings shall contain the dimensions of the fetus and shall be  
114 realistic and appropriate for the stage of pregnancy depicted. The materials shall be objective,  
115 nonjudgmental and designed to convey only accurate scientific information about the human fetus at the  
116 various gestational ages; and

117 3. Materials containing objective information describing the methods of abortion procedures

118 commonly employed, the medical risks commonly associated with each such procedure, the possible  
119 detrimental psychological effects of abortion, and the medical risks commonly associated with carrying a  
120 child to term.

121 The Department of Health shall make these materials available at each local health department and,  
122 upon request, to any person or entity, in reasonable numbers and without cost to the requesting party.

123 E G. Any physician who fails to comply with the provisions of this section shall be subject to a  
124 \$2,500 civil penalty.