



## *BILL SUMMARY*

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# Abortion Ban via Telemedicine HF 2175

Status of Bill: House Calendar  
Committee: Human Resources (passed 12-9)  
Lead Democrats: Rep. Beth Wessel-Kroeschell  
Floor Manager: Rep. Koester  
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### **Background**

Planned Parenthood has been providing medication abortion services via telemedicine in Iowa since 2008. The service is only available during the first nine weeks of the pregnancy. Planned Parenthood has 12 locations around Iowa where this service is provided.

The procedure followed during medication abortion services via telemedicine is the same as a procedure of an in-person medication abortion. Rather than handing the medication to the patient, only a licensed physician can remotely open a drawer with the medication inside for the patient to access. The patient receives the same tests, exam, and education by a licensed medical professional.

In 2010, the Iowa Board of Medicine received a complaint from Operation Rescue that the procedure did not follow Iowa law that only a licensed physician may perform an abortion procedure. The Board investigated the complaint and determined that the process used by Planned Parenthood did follow the law, as well as concluded there should be no action for discipline or changes to standards of practice.

In 2012, Rep. Dawn Pettengill petitioned the Department of Human Services to require physicians in the room for medication abortions, Director Palmer denied the petition.

As new appointments came up on the Board of Medicine, Governor Branstad selected new members of the Board that oppose medication abortion services via telemedicine. In June of 2013, the Board approved a petition to ban medication abortions via telemedicine in Iowa. Administrative rules were filed and adopted by the ARRC committee last fall.

In November of 2013, District Court put a temporary stay on the implementation of the rule. The stay will remain in effect until the case is decided.

### **Summary**

House File 2175 prohibits the cause to dispense any chemical agent or drug designed to terminate a human pregnancy with the intent that the pregnant woman will use the drug to terminate her pregnancy. This is only prohibited when the drug is dispensed to the pregnant woman via telecommunications technology, including but not limited to a webcam or teleconferencing.

A person who is regulated by the Health Profession Board under Chapter 147 and whom violates this prohibition may lose their license and will be subject to the maximum penalty applicable by the professional licensing board, including but not limited to the loss of licensure and civil penalties.

Proponents of the bill oppose all abortions and feel that limiting access will reduce the number of abortions performed. Opponents of the bill say this is a safe procedure and that limits access to women's health care in rural Iowa.

Furlong, Zeke [LEGIS]\G:\Caucus Staff\ZFurlong\2014\Word\Human Resources\bill summ - Telemed and abortions.docx\February 11, 2014\1:15 PM