

# California Shuts Down Abortion Clinics

*A network of abortion clinics in a Hispanic community have closed down and its owner could face nearly 20 years in prison.*



[] In a major victory for the pro-life cause, a woman abortionist accused of illegally operating as many as 11 abortion clinics has been convicted of nine felony counts of committing abortions without a medical license.

Operation Rescue, a pro-life group that fought for years to close abortion clinics owned and operated by Bertha Pinedo Bugarin, reported on Monday that an “entire abortion empire has collapsed.”

“This is a huge victory for the pro-life movement, and a prime example of how we can use the laws that are on the books to close abortion mills forever,” said Troy Newman, president of the Kansas-based Operation Rescue.

Bugarin, 48, gave her guilty plea in a San Diego County courtroom last Thursday, just days after pleading no contest to seven comparable felonies in Los Angeles. Sentencing for her crimes is scheduled for early next year.

According to Operation Rescue, abortionists on staff at her Clinica Medica Para La Mujer de Hoy [Medical Clinic for Today’s Woman] were stripped of their licenses for various offenses over the years, including sex crimes convictions for one practitioner.

Leaders at Operation Rescue said in 1999 they began heavily focusing on Bugarin’s clinics, which were located many times in lower income Latino neighborhoods throughout southern California. The group claimed it consistently exposed and reported wrongdoing over the years.

"This criminal preyed on women in the Hispanic community and has now been held accountable," said Bonnie Dumanis, San Diego's district attorney. "By passing herself off as a doctor, she put these women's lives in serious danger."

One incident used as evidence in the case against Bugarin took place in the summer of 2004, when paramedics reportedly arrived at Clinica Medica Para la Mujer de Hoy in Santa Ana, Calif., to find a young woman lying in a pool of her own blood. According to the *Los Angeles Times* the doctor, who was in his early 80's, was later accused of aborting the woman's baby in a "barbaric" way. He surrendered his license the following year.

"Bugarin acted as if she was above the law, as so many abortionists do," Newman said. "The prosecutors did not agree, and now Bugarin should remain behind bars for many years."

Operation Rescue, a heavily activist anti-abortion organization, recently made headlines for buying and closing an abortion clinic in Wichita, Kansas. **-Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**