

Texas to President Obama: Tough

With the Obama Administration's Department of Health & Human Services in the process of enacting a new regulation that would require states to continue to fund Planned Parenthood through their Medicaid programs, Texas has a simple message to the lame-duck president:

Pound sand.

State health officials have delivered a letter to Planned Parenthood on Tuesday that serves as the "final notice of termination," removing the abortionists from the Medicaid program. Unless Planned Parenthood appeals—it has instead initiated a preemptive lawsuit in federal court—the abortionists will no longer receive compensation for "services" provided to Medicaid-covered patients on Jan. 4.

The state is basing its decision on the now-famous Center for Medical Progress undercover videos that documented the sale of body parts from aborted babies for profit. While no criminal proceedings have begun yet, many observers have noted those acts are a violation of federal and state laws.

"Your misconduct is directly related to whether you are qualified to provide medical services in a professionally competent, safe, legal and ethical manner," Texas Health and Human Services Inspector General Stuart Bowen wrote in the letter. "Your actions violate generally accepted medical standards, as reflected in state and federal law, and are Medicaid program violations that justify termination."

Gov. Greg Abbott had been pushing for "full defunding" of Planned Parenthood for more than a year. His office has not responded to the news of Bowen's letter to the abortionists.

States were warned earlier this year, even before the new proposed HHS regulation, that denying Planned Parenthood funding from their Medicaid programs without proper justification could be illegal. Although the program is federally funded, states are allowed to allocate those funds at their own discretion, as long as they fall within federal regulations.

President-elect Donald Trump has not yet weighed in on the new regulation, which he could quickly reverse with his own executive action. However, he has repeatedly stated that states should have the discretion to decide how to handle the abortion issue—effectively a reversal of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. {eoa}