

Mother Who Gave Teenaged Daughter Abortion Pill Faces Harsh Reality

A Pennsylvania woman has been sentenced to up to 18 months in prison for obtaining so-called abortion pills online and providing them to her teenage daughter to end her pregnancy.

Jennifer Ann Whalen, 39, of Washingtonville, a single mother who works as a nursing home aide, pleaded guilty in August to obtaining the miscarriage-inducing pills from an online site in Europe for her daughter, 16, who did not want to have the child.

Whalen was sentenced on Friday by Montour County Court of Common Pleas Judge Gary Norton to serve 12 months to 18 months in prison for violating a state law that requires abortions to be performed by physicians.

She was also fined \$1,000 and ordered to perform 40 hours of community service after her release. The felony offense called for up to seven years in prison and a \$15,000 fine.

Matthew Bingham Banks, Whalen's lawyer, previously told Reuters that criminal prosecutions of this kind were not common.

Whalen told authorities there was no local clinic available to perform an abortion, and her daughter did not have health insurance to cover a hospital abortion, the *Press Enterprise* newspaper of Bloomsburg reported.

Her daughter experienced severe cramping and bleeding after taking the pills, and Whalen took the girl to a hospital near her home for treatment, the newspaper said.

The closest abortion clinic to Whalen's home is about 74 miles

away in Harrisburg.

The Pennsylvania case follows the prosecution of a Florida man who pleaded guilty to tricking his girlfriend into taking an abortion pill. He was sentenced in January to 13 years in prison and ordered to pay \$28,500 restitution. In June, Florida toughened state law to allow for prosecutions in the death of non-viable fetuses.

Reporting by David DeKok; editing by David Bailey and Rosalind Russell

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