

June 5, 2018

Mr. Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Google
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, California 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai,

We write urging Google to take immediate action to correct a practice that misleads millions of people using your search engine and makes Google an accomplice in fraudulent medical care.

Everyday, people use Google to search for abortion providers. Everyday, Google allows misleading ads that indicate the advertiser likely provides or refers for abortion, when in fact it does not. These ads are sponsored by often-unlicensed centers posing as clinics and aim to lure in vulnerable pregnant individuals, who are often very young women living in poverty.¹ And it's not just misleading ads. Results that come up for search terms like "abortion care near me" in Search and Maps also do not reliably provide or refer for abortion at all. Google's failures in this matter are well-documented by journalists at The Guardian, Bay Area News Group, and others.²

Those who follow Google's referral to these "providers" that appear in search results end up wasting time and often money at these facilities that do not provide what Google says they do. What's more, the staff there even attempt to shame and coerce pregnant individuals out of considering abortion. The coercion tactics include telling patients medically disproven lies, such as that abortion leads to breast cancer, infertility, or mental health problems.³ Some of these sham providers even intentionally date pregnancies incorrectly in order to trick patients into believing it is no longer possible to medically or legally obtain an abortion.

Permitting these deceptive, fraudulent practices is not consistent with Google's laudable action to crack down on fraud in a number of areas, including but not limited to:

- Removing ads for fake or unqualified rehab centers preying on those suffering from opioid or alcohol abuse
- Limiting ads for payday lenders
- A verification for locksmiths to prevent fraud⁴

¹ [The Public Health Risks of Crisis Pregnancy Centers](#), Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, September 2012

² [Google search results for abortion services promote anti-abortion centers](#), The Guardian, February 13, 2018

[Google points abortion-seekers towards anti-abortion clinics](#), Bay Area News Group, February 12, 2018

³ [Abortion misinformation from crisis pregnancy centers in North Carolina](#), Contraception, December 2012

⁴ [Google Sets Limits on Addiction Treatment Ads, Citing Safety](#), New York Times, September 14, 2017

- No longer allowing for-profit bail bond providers, which prey on communities of color and vulnerable low-income neighborhoods, to advertise.⁵

Google is consistently the first place that millions of women visit when they think they may need an abortion, because people trust Google to be an honest broker of accurate information. Until you resolve this, Google is not deserving of this trust. Just as Google ensures that various targeted communities do not fall victim to predatory businesses, Google should take care not to direct individuals needing medical care to sham providers. For the four in ten women who will choose abortion, Google should be the front door to safe abortion referral--and not to aiding deceptive, fraudulent scams.

The undersigned organizations therefore urge you to take action immediately and end misleading results in Search and Maps, as well as ban misleading ads that violate your policies.

Sincerely,
Advocates For Youth
Black Women's Health Imperative
Broward County NOW
CREDO Action
Feminist Majority Foundation
Hadassah
MoveOn.org
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Abortion Federation
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood
Pro Choice Coalition of Broward
Progress Florida
ReproAction
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US (SIECUS)
UltraViolet
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

⁵ [Google bans bail bonds from ad platform](#), The Hill, May 7, 2018