

Testimony Given By

Tamra Call, RN, MSN

*Executive Director at Obria Medical Clinic of Ames
Ames, Iowa*

In A Hearing Before
Committee on the Budget
U.S. Senate

On

**“No Rights to Speak of: The Economic Harms of Restricting Reproductive
Freedom”**

February 28, 2024

Dirksen Senate Office Building

Introduction

Thank you Chairman Whitehouse and Ranking Member Grassley and the other members of this committee for giving me an opportunity to testify today.

My name is Tamra Call and I'm the Executive Director at Obria Medical Clinic of Ames. Our mission is to provide reproductive healthcare and support women in a way which empowers them to make informed, life-affirming decisions. Ames, Iowa is home to Iowa State University. There are Obria Medical Clinics located across the country.

Obria has been certified by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), which accredits outpatient clinics, surgery centers, and college student health centers. Certification from AAAHC reflects a dedication to high-quality client healthcare. We also operate in compliance with all HIPAA laws. Our clinic is staffed by an OBGYN, nurse practitioners, radiologists, and highly trained registered nurses.

Our Approach

At Obria, we have the privilege of working with smart, strong, and resilient women. Overwhelmingly, the needs women communicate to our staff is not much different than what we all need: healthy relationships with people who will support us without judgment and empower us on the journey to be successful.

Obria provides health care services at no cost including pregnancy testing, early ultrasound imaging, monitoring for a possible ectopic or miscarriage and providing medical and emotional support, as well as after-abortion care.

Obria also provides low-cost comprehensive testing of sexually transmitted infections and treatment.

Stats and Story

We see hundreds of women at Obria every year. We see women who are in college and afraid they will have to drop out if they choose to carry their pregnancy. Some are professional women who already have children but weren't planning to have more. Some women are struggling to make ends meet and adding a child feels impossible. Others do not have support from the father of the baby.

I am extremely grateful and humbled to have the opportunity today to share a story that is representative of the hundreds of women we have seen at Obria. Her name has been changed to protect her identity.

I'd like to introduce you to Aisa, who moved from Pakistan to the United States, along with her two young children, for a job at Iowa State University. She made the move because her husband was not supporting her or her children. Aisa's husband came to the U.S. to visit the children and during his visit Aisa became pregnant. She knew her

husband would not provide support and she felt very overwhelmed at the thought of caring for three young children. Aisa felt an abortion was her only option.

Aisa scheduled an appointment at our clinic to get more information about the decision she needed to make. The nursing staff performed a pregnancy test and provided her with information about abortion, adoption, and parenting. I have copies of the brochures shared with her and they are available for your review. The staff listened to her concerns and provided support. Aisa had an ultrasound and when she saw her baby's heartbeat, she knew she wanted to parent. She felt heard, understood, and supported which empowered her to carry her pregnancy. She is successfully parenting her three children and has maintained her job at Iowa State University.

Obria provides numerous support services and referrals for women. Obria is a Qualified Entity in the state of Iowa to provide Presumptive Eligibility Insurance. This means that prenatal care is covered right away while the full Medicaid application is being processed. Obria also assists women in applying for WIC, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Family Investment Program (FIP), and Childcare Assistance. The state of Iowa has a live map of childcare providers and openings. Obria also connects women with housing resources. There are two organizations in our community that provide short-term, intermediate, and long-term housing for families. These organizations provide case management and assistance in applying for Section VIII housing if the family qualifies. We provide women with referrals to childbirth classes, parenting classes, Early Head Start and Parents as Teachers. Obria offers a Community Mom's Group to foster connection and support among women with young children. We also have referral partners to assist women with food stability, applying for jobs, basic finance classes, transportation needs, and medical care.

Conclusion

A woman should never feel that abortion is her *only* option. When a woman walks into our clinic, she often feels abortion is her only option. The staff at Obria prioritize open communication, allowing the woman to actively participate in her reproductive healthcare decisions. The woman is met with a holistic approach that considers her physical, emotional, social, and financial well-being. This approach not only supports the woman in making an informed choice, but also reinforces her autonomy and empowerment in navigating her reproductive journey. The information and relational support a woman receives at Obria, instills in her the confidence she needs to be successful. Most of our clients, whether they choose to carry their pregnancy or not, return to Obria for care. What starts as a positive pregnancy test ends in a trusting relationship where we can provide support to women for years.