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Pro-choice Groups Call for InformAlberta, 211, and HealthLink to Stop Referring to Anti-Choice Homophobic Agencies

ALBERTA – The Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) and Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition are asking the online directory "InformAlberta", 211, 811 HealthLink and its partners to stop listing and referring to anti-choice, transphobic, and homophobic agencies. Policies must be updated to ensure that Inform Alberta directory listings uphold the government obligation to support Canadian and Alberta human rights protections for gender, gender identity, and gender expression and orientation. These protections include the right to medically ethical, professional, and unbiased services.

The Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition petition has over 1100 signatures to date. https://www.change.org/p/alberta-health-services-inform-alberta-must-stop-listing-referring-anti-choice-organizations

"Continued referral to agencies that oppose the rights of women and LGBT people, exposes clients to potentially unsafe treatment that may violate accepted health protocols and medical ethics," said Kathy Dawson, Board Member of the Alberta Pro-Choice Coalition.

The InformAlberta online directory at https://informalberta.ca/public/common/search.do refers to crisis pregnancy care centres (CPCs) when searching on the terms: abortion, sexual health education, teen pregnancy, and pregnancy test. CPCs will not refer clients for contraception or abortion and most require belief in celibacy for people not in a heterosexual marriage. Most CPCs lack medical staff or accredited counsellors and cannot provide pregnancy care or medical follow-up to a pregnancy test. CPCs do not provide comprehensive sexual health education and websites fail to address LGBT or gender identity and orientation.

"It is appalling that a search for abortion on a government website results in anti-choice agencies that exist to undermine access to healthcare. These agencies spread stigma and misinformation about reproductive healthcare, and exploit the fears and vulnerabilities of their clients," said Joyce Arthur, Executive Director of the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada.

InformAlberta.ca is a provincial online directory of publicly funded and/or not-for-profit community, health, social, and government organizations and services. The directory is maintained by the InformAlberta Partners – health zones and community information and

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referral services across Alberta. This directory is used by Health Link (811), 211 volunteers, and others to provide service referrals to Albertans seeking information on contraception, abortion, pregnancy, and other sexual and reproductive health matters. We rely on Alberta Health Services and its partners to:

1) Deliver medically accurate, evidence-based health information guided by accepted health protocols and medical ethics

2) Respect Canadian and Alberta human rights protections for gender, gender identity, and gender expression and orientation

3) Provide accredited medical and counselling services

4) Reflect Charter rights (Section 7) that support abortion as a legal right to "life, liberty and security of person." (R v. Morgentaler 1988)

Alberta Health and its partners must update their website and their policies to protect the rights of women and LGBT people by permanently removing groups that seek to undermine their Charter rights.

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