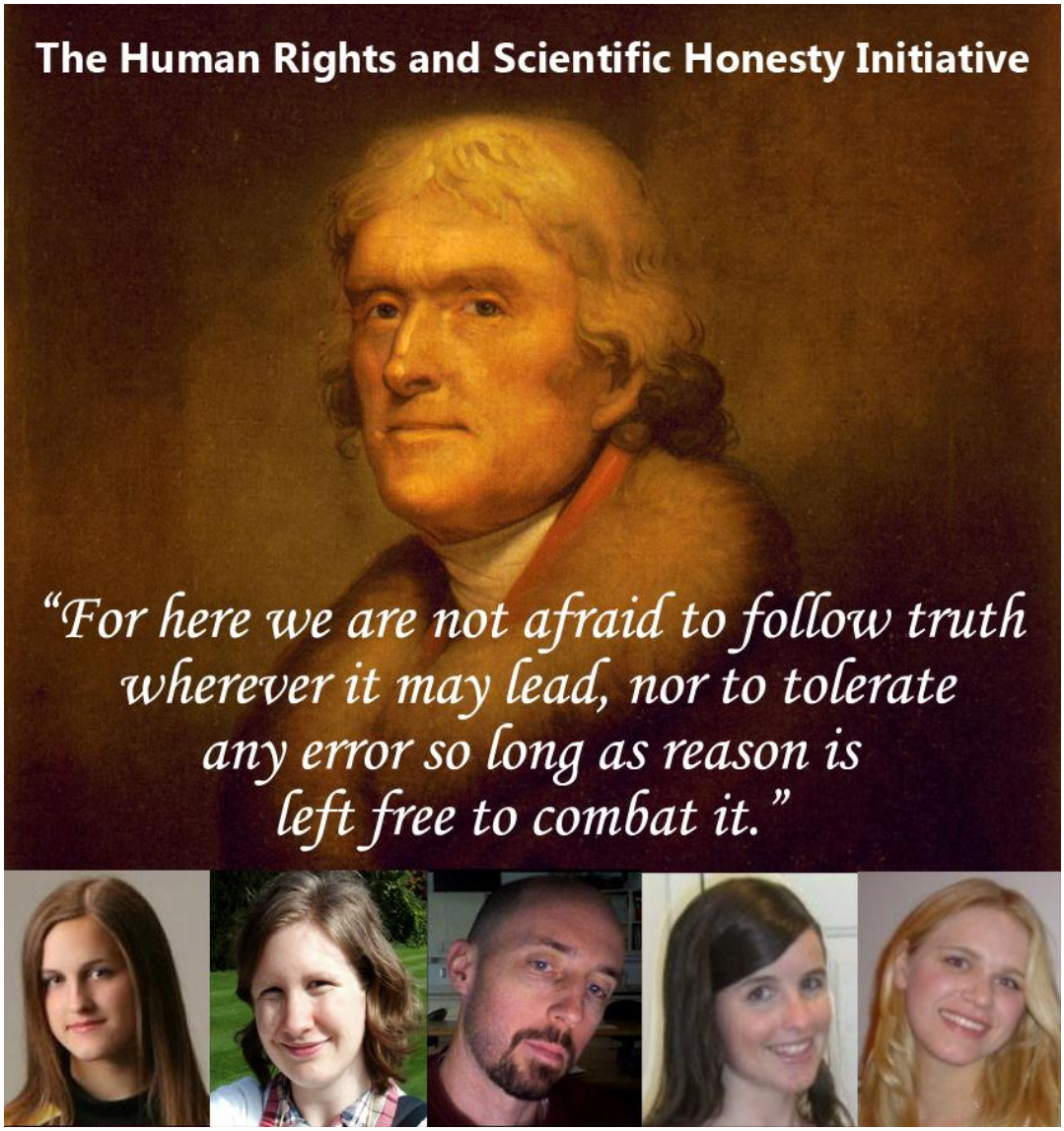

The Human Rights and Scientific Honesty Initiative

Dr. Teresa A. Sullivan, Ph.D.
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February 15, 2011

Dear Dr. Sullivan,

We are writing to you as a group of concerned Virginia college students, faculty, and alumni to bring your attention to some issues of great consequence. Over the past twenty years or so, some colleges and universities have enacted policies inside their health care infrastructures that have denied their patients complete and accurate medical information. Additionally, a few have quietly taken it upon themselves to participate in deliberately ending the lives of other members of our human family that we consider of equal value to our own.

Certain categories of pharmaceutical products have been marketed and sold by some colleges and universities accompanied by woeful misinformation. These policies have needlessly damaged the health and well being of countless ill informed students and other patients in the long term, and continue to do so currently. Meanwhile, some universities have been performing elective abortions in their own university hospitals. Regarding these violent and needless procedures, there has likewise been a systematically dishonest policy of withholding critical medical information from their own students and other patients. Here again, many have already suffered great harm – and many more await the same fate. This is unacceptable.

Currently, two Virginia state-funded universities are performing elective abortions in house. Neither advertises this fact publicly, but instead relies on word of mouth. One of them is Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), which according to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has performed 9120 "induced terminations" in the years between 1988 and 2009.[1] The other institution is unfortunately your own University of Virginia (UVA), which has performed 2480 abortions in house between 1991 and 2009. [2] While the VDH does not differentiate between elective abortions and those that are necessary to save the mother's life or to induce a medically inevitable miscarriage, national statistics show that the vast majority (over 98%) of abortions performed in the United States are entirely elective.[3]

While we acknowledge that there is not a unanimous state or national consensus regarding these important human rights issues, we do not think that UVA should be performing any elective abortion procedures within their health care infrastructure, especially considering its status as a taxpayer funded state university. This constitutes a violation of the conscience rights of students and their families paying tuition and fees to the University, alumni donors, and the UVA Health System employees who do so much to save lives – many of whom steadfastly refuse to use their medical skills to take lives. It also violates the legally established right of Virginia taxpayers statewide not to finance such gruesome procedures that are in direct violation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Declaration of Geneva as reaffirmed following the Nazi Doctor's Trial at Nuremberg, and our Right to Life as guaranteed in the Constitution of the United States of America.

In April 2010, the Virginia General Assembly passed a budget amendment, similar to the federal Hyde Amendment, limiting the ability of state-funded institutions to participate in elective abortions. The amendment prohibits state funding for abortions, except in cases of rape, or a threat to the mother's life or health.[4] Nationwide polls, meanwhile, suggest that restrictions on state and federal taxpayer funding for elective abortions are supported by a comfortable majority of Americans.[5][6]

To the extent that UVA receives federal funding, it is subject to additional abortion restrictions. The Hyde Amendment, which forbids taxpayer funding of elective abortions with very narrow exceptions, has been the law of the land since 1976. Per an Executive Order signed by President Barack Obama in 2010, these restrictions may also apply to any funds that UVA receives through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.[7]

Unfortunately, the corruption of medical ethics and the use of public funds toward this end are even more widespread than performing elective abortions as a state-funded university. The UVA Health System, in coordination with Elson Student Health Center and

the Teen Health Center, has not put the health and well being of its own students and other patients at the top of their list of priorities. This is the case at all three institutions, as they all provide the patients they serve with incomplete and/or misleading medical information about both abortion procedures and some of the popular pharmaceutical drugs they provide.

With regard to abortions, UVA does not inform women that the surgical procedure significantly increases their chances of giving birth preterm and extremely preterm later in life, thus often burdening their future children with serious, lifelong developmental disabilities.[8][9][10] Indeed, there may well be children already living a life with cerebral palsy needlessly due only to their misinformed mother having chosen abortion at UVA as an easy way out of a difficult situation in the past. Additionally, women are not warned that abortions have been shown to cause breast cancer in numerous peer reviewed scientific studies.[11][12] This is at least a plausible risk that should not be ignored. Meanwhile, the proven increase in breast cancer risk by delaying a first full term pregnancy in college-aged women via abortion is also not communicated to them. So both the proven and plausible increased risks of giving birth preterm and developing breast cancer have been and continue to be kept secret from the very women who trust the UVA Health System to tell them the whole truth regarding serious threats to their health.

Unpleasant as these scientific facts are to those that politically support elective abortion access, we demand that UVA begin clearly communicating *all* of them to all pregnant women who approach any part of the UVA health care infrastructure – even for an abortion referral to one of the other two abortion facilities in the Charlottesville area. The medical science of a compromised cervix, uterine infection, and type three breast lobule cancer protections, do not and will not ever conform to any political ideology.

We find abhorrent the current policy of the UVA Teen Health Center in giving away the Morning-After Pills free to any teenager - male or female - without so much as a simple blood test to screen for the very real potential of disabling or fatal blood clots. At the very least, the same precautions as legally required for similar steroid hormones forty times less powerful ('birth control' pills) should apply here also. And these pills should *never* be given to any male of any age, as there are already men imprisoned in Virginia and elsewhere for slipping pills into a pregnant woman's drink without her knowledge to cause an early abortion.[13] Sadly, UVA is no more honest about the powerful drugs it sells women to cause an abortion at four to eight weeks after conception (such as Mifepristone or Misoprostol) than it is the ones it gives away free that can cause abortions at one to two weeks after conception. The proven risks that both of these pill regimens pose to women with regard to ectopic pregnancy should also be clearly communicated.[14][15] If women are not warned about their increased risk of an ectopic pregnancy, and that the symptoms thereof are often masked by the pills' side effects, the ectopic pregnancy may not be uncovered until it is too late. And there needs to be a much more realistic set of warnings given to girls and women about the potential for serious physical and emotional side effects from the Morning-After Pills, which so many have already suffered through in silence.

The current policy of having students employed by Elson carrying the Morning-After Pills around Grounds to distribute on the weekends is reckless and dangerous. The ability and potential for the Morning-After Pills to expel an embryo after conception should also be clearly communicated, and the use of the very misleading term "emergency contraception" should be discontinued immediately. The University should never again be an institution that forwards misleading brand names on behalf of pharmaceutical giants. It is interesting to note

that on one UVA web page famous for incomplete information, a young human life is referred to as a "fertilized ovum" of no consequence - while on another that same life is referred to as "the baby growing inside." [16][17] If UVA does indeed reject the science of human development, they could at least be consistent about it on their own website.

We also request that the UVA Health System and Elson Student Health Center update and revise their incomplete and misleading warnings given to women inquiring about hormonal contraceptives. Estrogens and progestins have been scientifically proven to cause breast cancer, cervical cancer, liver cancer, birth defects, and heart disease in numerous medical studies.[18][19][20][21][22][23][24] They have been classified by the World Health Organization as Group 1 carcinogens.[25] Amazingly, there is not one word about any of these facts to be found on UVA's online or printed literature regarding these drugs.

Instead, there are only references to the two relatively rare cancers from which they offer women some protection – endometrial and ovarian – and utterly ridiculous short term comparisons to the rate of deaths in car accidents involving college aged people.[26] No mention is made of any of the very real long term effects of these cancer causing steroids whatsoever. And in a display of restrictive and unsophisticated bias on the part of UVA, the Elson Student Health website currently links to both MTV and Planned Parenthood as resources for health information.[27]

Of all the things that any university should be involved in, causing cancers in women and birth defects in their children by keeping its own students misinformed about medical science should certainly not be among them. Sadly, this has been the case at UVA for a long time – and enough people are already living or dying with the very real consequences of UVA's dishonesty regarding these medical, scientific facts. Enough is enough.

As students of conscience, we are disappointed that UVA has needlessly involved itself in medical procedures that directly kill and discard innocent, healthy, and defenseless human infants – and often do great damage to the physical and emotional well being of *both* of the child's parents also. We are also appalled that Thomas Jefferson's wish that his University should always "follow the truth wherever it may lead" has been abandoned by the previous UVA administration under the leadership of John Casteen with regard to science and medical honesty. This is a serious breach of medical ethics on several fronts – and we fear that it is being funded with our taxes, our tuition and fees, and our donations.

UVA has not proven its compliance with state and federal funding laws in the area of performing elective abortions inside a hospital complex that should always strive to save lives rather than take them. It is our position that using state funded facilities to perform elective abortions may violate the law, and that it undoubtedly violates the *spirit* of the law. We also suspect that UVA student health insurance funds are being used to finance elective abortions, and request clarification on this issue from UVA. We already know those funds are being used to disseminate medical misinformation as it is.

Accordingly, we the undersigned respectfully demand that UVA cease to perform elective abortions, and maintain this policy in all of its hospitals and health system divisions. We respectfully demand that UVA change its policies throughout its healthcare infrastructure back to those adhering to scientific honesty, medical ethics, and human rights. A genuine concern for their own students' and other patients' well being should

replace the current policies of deliberate misinformation given to them regarding chemical, medical, and surgical abortions – as well as the hormonal steroid drugs UVA dispenses.

If these changes are not made with urgency by UVA, we will endeavor to find legislative and legal remedies in Richmond and Washington to these severe problems.

None of this should have ever been allowed to happen in the first place, especially not at Mr. Jefferson's University. And on behalf of the health of women and children, mothers and fathers, current students and elderly alumni alike – the time has come for human rights and scientific honesty to return to these hallowed Grounds, upon which a foundation of scientific truth, academic honor, and medical ethics took root so long ago.

"WHEREAS the child, by reason of his or her physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth…"

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

"I will maintain the utmost respect for human life, from the time of its conception; even under threat, I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity; I will practice my profession with conscience and dignity."

Hippocratic Oath
Declaration of Geneva

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