

Lawmakers ask Google to fix abortion searches that mislead users to 'anti-abortion fake clinics'

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Some Democratic members of Congress have asked Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai to address concerns about Google search and map results

for abortion information that are including "anti-abortion fake clinics."

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., and Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., in a letter dated Friday, called "especially concerning" a report from the non-profit organization, the Center for Countering Digital Hate. The CCDH report found 37% of Google Maps results and 11% of Google searches for "[abortion clinic](#) near me" and "[abortion](#) pill"—in states with "trigger laws," that would take effect automatically or through quick state action if Roe v. Wade is overturned—were for "anti-abortion fake clinics."

These clinics, also called "crisis pregnancy centers" or "pregnancy resource centers" do not provide abortions and "seek to steer women away from certain [health decisions](#)," the legislators wrote.

The CCDH report also found 28% of Google ads displayed atop search results were for anti-abortion clinics. One ad for a Mississippi clinic appeared to offer free abortion consultations, but upon looking at its website the CCDH said it found the clinic does not perform abortions or provide referrals for the procedure.

"When people search for information or services relating to their sexual and [reproductive health](#), Google is sending them to sites that users might expect contains robust, scientific, evidence-driven healthcare information—but they actually contain ideologically-driven opinion and misinformation," CCDH chief executive Imran Ahmed said in the report.

Google, in a statement to U.S. TODAY, said, "Across our products, we work to make high-quality information easily accessible, particularly on critical health topics. Any organization that wants to advertise to people seeking information about abortion services on Google must be certified and show in-ad disclosures that clearly state whether they do or do not offer abortions."

In a statement to Reuters, which first reported the letter, Pichai said: "We're always looking at ways to improve our results to help people find what they're looking for, or understand if what they're looking for may not be available."

The legislators wrote that with a Supreme Court draft opinion, leaked in May, suggesting justices may overturn *Roe v. Wade*, "we find these reports especially concerning and would appreciate your immediate attention to this matter."

"Directing women towards fake clinics that traffic in misinformation and don't provide comprehensive health services is dangerous to women's health and undermines the integrity of Google's search results," they added in the letter, which was also signed by another 13 senators including Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. and six additional members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The legislators ask Google what steps it will take to make sure users get "[accurate information](#)" when they search for "abortion clinic," "abortion pill," and similar terms. That includes whether it will "limit the appearance of anti-abortion fake clinics or so-called 'crisis pregnancy centers' in" Google search results, or provide "user-friendly disclaimers that clearly indicate whether or not a search result does or does not provide abortions," the legislators wrote.

"If Google must continue showing these misleading results in [search results](#) and Google Maps, the results should, at the very least, be appropriately labeled," they wrote.

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