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The Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Inc., a national organization,
Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Inc.
515 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

April 7, 1965

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FOR RELEASE SATURDAY,
APRIL 10, 1965

"VOLUNTARY STERILIZATION LEGAL IN ALL
50 STATES," DECLARES MEDICAL AUTHOR-
ITY. "STATE BATTLES ON COMPULSORY
STERILIZATION CONFUSE PUBLIC."

A.V.S., which maintains a roster of 1500 cooperating physicians nationwide,
"Voluntary sterilization is legal in all 50 states, with restrictions on its
practice only in Connecticut, Kansas and Utah," H. Curtis Wood, Jr., M.D.,
stated today at headquarters of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization,
Inc., 515 Madison Avenue, New York. Dr. Wood, Medical Field Consultant to
A.V.S., said, "The public is confused by recent news of legal fights involving
compulsory sterilization. In Connecticut and Wisconsin, battles are erupting
over old state laws permitting compulsory sterilization of some inmates of
state institutions. But such cases have nothing whatever to do with the legal-
ity of voluntary sterilization."
Pointing out that over 1,500,000 Americans have already chosen to be sterilized,
and that each year more than 100,000 obtain sterilization operations for birth
control reasons, Dr. Wood declared that voluntary sterilization is on the in-
crease in this country. "According to Time Magazine of January 15, 1965," he
said, "it has become one of the most popular operations in the U.S."

Conversely, compulsory sterilization of the institutionalized is on the decline.
While in 1950, for example, there were reported 1,526 such compulsory opera-
tions, the number had dwindled to 1,067 by 1955, and down to 467 by 1963.

The Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Inc., a national organization, conducts a three-fold program of education, research and service. Last summer, an A.V.S.-sponsored voluntary sterilization program, set up as a pilot project in Kentucky Appalachia, resulted in over a hundred voluntary operations within a six-month period, and established the fact of a high degree of acceptance of sterilization among both men and women in the Kentucky hill country. The Associated Press reported that one gaunt woman, signing for the operation, said, "Times is hard. We just can't take care of any more children!"

A.V.S., which maintains a roster of 1500 cooperating physicians nationwide, effects education on the importance of government participation in voluntary sterilization programs as one solution to family and population problems. Robert W. Laidlaw, M.D., prominent New York psychiatrist and former President of A.V.S., has declared, "We see no reason why this method of birth control should not be made known by government to mothers and fathers who may wish to choose it under wise and prudent professional guidance."

Vasectomy, the male operation, can be done under a local anesthetic in a physician's office and takes about 15 minutes. Not to be confused with castration, male sterilization does not involve removal of any glands or organs, and sexual potency is unimpaired. The female operation, tubal ligation, is somewhat more complicated and is usually done within 48 hours after a woman has had a child in the hospital. It is comparable to an uncomplicated appendectomy. Either operation may be chosen by couples who need a sure method of birth control and have tried other contraceptive measures without success.

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Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Inc.
515 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

April 15, 1965

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FOR RELEASE Saturday,
April 17, 1965

1700 VOLUNTARY STERILIZATION OPERATIONS
PLEDGED BY DOCTORS IN 28 STATES AS CONTRIBUTION
TO NEEDY FAMILIES WHO WANT SURE BIRTH CONTROL

In a remarkable development in America's War on Poverty, 116 private physicians in 28 states have pledged to perform, without charge, a total of over 1700 voluntary contraceptive sterilization operations for indigent families who request them, it was announced today by John R. Rague, Executive Director of the Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Inc., 515 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y.

"These doctors are to be congratulated," declared Mr. Rague. "The donation of the operations by the 'private sector' of the professional community has a value that cannot be measured in dollars alone. No War on Poverty can succeed without free access to birth control information and techniques, including voluntary sterilization. And when a hard-pressed family have all the children they want and can possibly provide for, the assurance of the most reliable method of birth control is incalculable. However, strictly in terms of money, the operations pledged by these doctors represent a contribution totaling over \$100,000."

The doctors involved, Mr. Rague said, include both gynecologists and urologists - that is, they do both female and male sterilization operations. Vasectomy, the male operation, is simple for a skilled surgeon and can be done in 10 or 15 minutes under a local anesthetic. The patient walks out of the office and can return to work in a day or two. Not to be confused with castration, vasectomy does not involve the

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removal of any glands or organs, and the man's sexual potency is unimpaired.

The female operation, called salpingectomy or tubal ligation, is somewhat more involved and is often done in a hospital within 48 hours after the woman has had a child. It is roughly comparable in seriousness to an uncomplicated appendectomy.

The Association for Voluntary Sterilization, Inc. conducts a three-fold program of education, research and service to make known the benefits of voluntary sterilization in family and population problems. Best estimates indicate that more than 100,000 Americans annually choose this method of birth control. Last summer, an A.V.S.-sponsored voluntary sterilization program, set up as a pilot project in Kentucky Appalachia, resulted in over a hundred voluntary operations within a six-month period, and established the fact of a high degree of acceptance of sterilization among both men and women in the Kentucky hill country. The Associated Press reported that one gaunt woman, signing for the operation, said, "Times is hard. We just can't take care of any more children!"

A.V.S., besides maintaining a roster of 1500 cooperating private physicians nationwide, also effects education on the importance of government participation in voluntary sterilization programs as a major method of family limitation.

Robert W. Laidlaw, M.D., prominent New York psychiatrist and former President of A.V.S., has declared, "We see no reason why this method of birth control should not be made known by government to mothers and fathers who may wish to choose it under wise and prudent professional guidance."

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