Google LLC
25 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Ninth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001

August 25, 2022

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Elissa Slotkin
United States House of Representatives
1210 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Warner, Representative Slotkin and other esteemed members of Congress:

Thank you for your letter dated June 17, 2022 regarding the policies we have in place for abortion-related advertising and the approach we take to providing results when people search for reproductive health care services in Search and Maps. We always welcome opportunities to consider feedback — including from the Center for Countering Digital Hate — and improve the ways we provide reliable, trustworthy, and authoritative information to users.

Please find more details below regarding specific features and policies designed to ensure high-quality information is easily accessible — particularly on health topics like abortion services — across our products:

Ads. We have clear and longstanding policies that govern abortion-related advertising on our platforms. In order to run ads on Search that target keywords or phrases related to getting an abortion, advertisers in the United States must complete our abortion certification process and verify whether they do or do not provide abortions. Based on the information provided in the certification process, an in-ad disclosure will show: “Provides abortions” or “Does not provide abortions.” For example, ads from organizations that provide pregnancy tests, abortion counseling, or otherwise serve pregnant individuals — but do not provide

abortions — will display the relevant disclosure making that clear. If an advertiser is **not** certified, it is not able to run ads using keywords related to obtaining an abortion in the United States.

We have heard from users this type of transparency has been useful since its implementation in 2019, and we are continually exploring ways to make disclosures more effective. For example, we recently updated these disclosures to make them more noticeable (see attachment). We have also updated our abortion certification and disclosures policy to clarify that advertisers that provide medication abortions or abortion pills — but do not dispense them to customers at their own facilities — may be certified as advertisers that provide abortions and have their ads labeled with the "Provides abortion" disclosure. Our goal is to help ensure ads transparently provide the information users need to decide which reproductive health services are most relevant to them.

We do not allow ads that promote harmful health claims. All ads displayed on our platforms must abide by our existing ads policies. We prohibit personalized advertising based on health conditions, treatments, or procedures — including pregnancy and abortion — under Google's ads personalization policies.

Results on Search and Maps. Our ranking systems on Search and Maps are designed to return the most relevant results from the most reliable sources. For topics where quality information is particularly important — like health, finance, civic information, and crisis situations — we place an even greater emphasis on factors related to expertise and trustworthiness. We work hard to surface business results that are relevant, accurate, and help users find what they are looking for.

We have extra layers of verification in place to help us confirm that places labeled as "abortion clinics" on Google Maps and Search offer abortions. We provide a way for anyone to flag problematic reviews, inappropriate content, and misleading places for removal. People can also report misleading business information to Google via the business redressal form. We take the risk of fake business profiles seriously and carry out a number of steps to combat them. We use a combination of machine learning and human review to take swift enforcement action against those who misrepresent their services.

Google's Local Search feature is an important tool for our users that provides results when someone is looking for businesses or places of interest in a particular area. For example, if a person searches for "hospitals in NYC", a Local Search results box will appear showing a list of hospitals in Manhattan.

We continue to update our Local Search services for local health-related queries, including those related to abortion services, to improve the accuracy and relevance. When someone in the US searches for health care providers that provide abortions — for example, using the query "abortion clinics near me" — the Local Search results box will display facilities that have been verified to provide abortions. People will be able to broaden their search to show other relevant listings (including from organizations that do not provide abortions). Local

Search results for such queries will also be clearly labeled as to whether the facility provides abortions.

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Once again, thank you for sharing your concerns. We are committed to ensuring that users who turn to Google have access to helpful information.

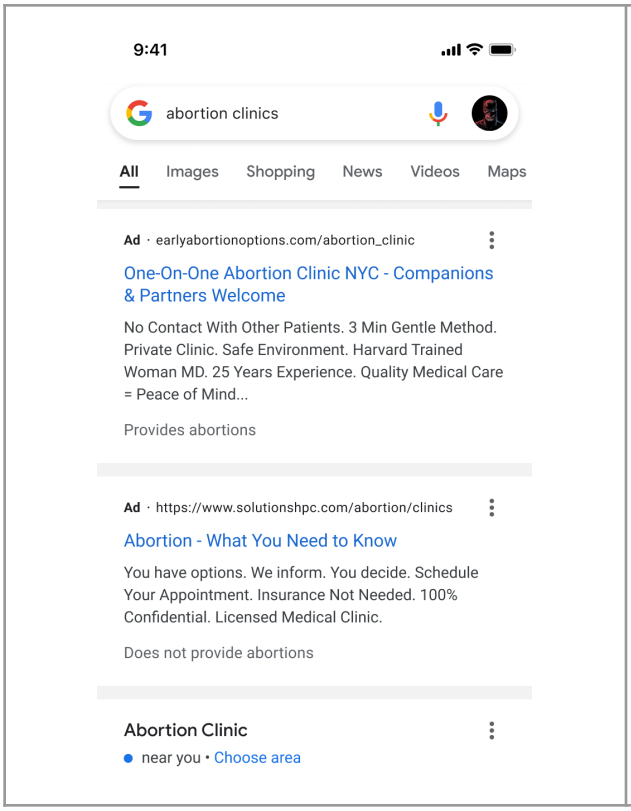
Sincerely,

Mark Isakowitz
Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy, US and Canada

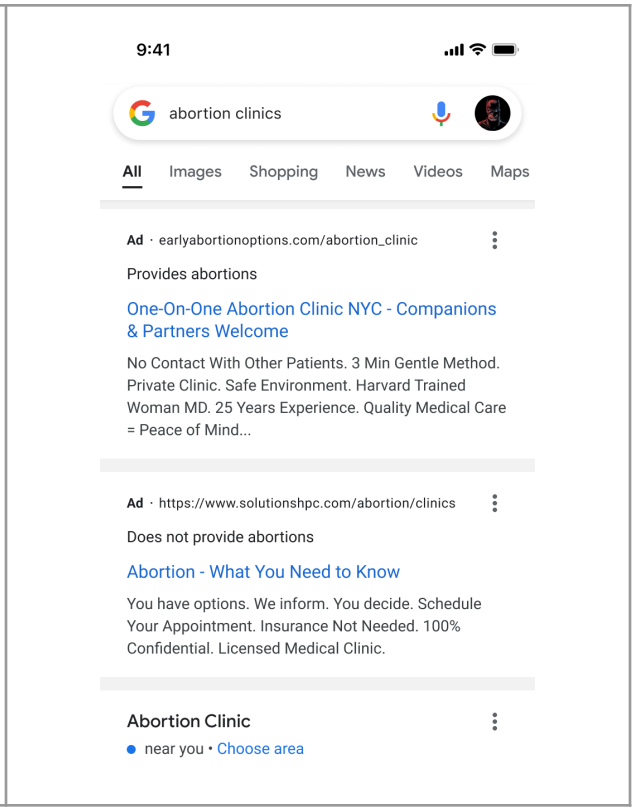
CC:
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
The Honorable Jason Crow
The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Donald S. Beyer Jr.
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Katie Porter
The Honorable John Hickenlooper
The Honorable Jackie Speier
The Honorable Alex Padilla
The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
The Honorable Edward J. Markey
The Honorable Bernard Sanders
The Honorable Michael F. Bennet
The Honorable Tina Smith

Attachment

Previous Ads UX



Current / Updated Ads UX



Moving the disclosures up right after the Ad badge provides a meaningful visibility boost.