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Media Release

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"Sorry" seems to be such a little word

The blunders that led to a pregnant woman being 'forced to have an abortion' are likely to be just the tip of an unbearably destructive iceberg.

That a mis-diagnosis at an Auckland laboratory should occur is regrettable. For that diagnosis to then be the basis on which a woman is advised to terminate her pregnancy is unbearable. That the woman was subsequently forced to have an abortion and still no one is responsible is unbelievable.

Comments from David Sage, the Auckland Health Board Medical Officer that the Board has offered its 'deepest apologies' to the family may be true, but surely ring just a little hollow.

For what, exactly, is the Board sorry? Sorry about the mix up at the lab, obviously. Sorry about telling this woman she had no other choice but to agree to abort her pregnancy? Sorry for carrying out the abortion? Sorry that no one double-checked or challenged the information that was about to end a life and change who knows how many others forever? Sorry for not giving this woman any other options?

What the Board might in fact be sorriest about, is that there is no way of knowing if this woman and her family or indeed the medical staff who instructed her, will ever receive the help required to resolve the issues which ending the life of another inevitably raise.

Those counselling post-abortive women tell of a kind of grief, unlike any other.

According to *Voice For Life* member Catherine Gillies, who has been involved in counselling post-abortion women for over 15 years, "The issues raised by abortion are incredibly complex. It takes a great deal of support, compassion and absolute honesty for people to even begin to think about it."

It has taken the Dominion Post over four months to begin to receive answers to questions raised about this event. The Auckland DHB has admitted they, "Now have a responsibility to implement the appropriate systems and process changes to ensure we are doing everything we can to stop an incident like this happening in the future."

What the DHB does not appear to be saying to the woman who was forced into abortion, is how she might begin to contemplate a way through her grief, brought about by the very people she turned to for help.

ENDS

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