

Pro-foreskin activists to protest at Capitol in Lansing, hospital in Metro Detroit



Courtesy of NoCirc of Michigan



By **Gus Burns** | fburns@mlive.com

Follow on Twitter

on September 06, 2014 at 8:00 AM, updated September 08, 2014 at 4:35 PM

DETROIT, MI -- Normal genitals are the best genitals, says Norm Cohen, the director of **NoCirc Michigan**, an anti-circumcision activist organization.

The organization is behind two upcoming protests, the first from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 12 on the north lawn of the state Capitol in Lansing and another at Beaumont Hospital 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 13.

Protestors intend to spread awareness about the reasons they say circumcision is wrong.

The Lansing protest will feature a group calling themselves Bloodstained Men and their Friends, which features men wearing white clothing with red stains over their groins.

Cohen says about 70 people are expected to attend the protest in Royal Oak. He expects a mix of "outspoken mothers" who researched the removal of foreskin when they had their children, some who had circumcisions performed on their children and later regretted it and men angry because they had a portion of their bodies removed without consent.

The goal of NoCirc, which lists more than 70 regional offices throughout the U.S., is to spread knowledge about what Cohen calls an unnecessary and inappropriate custom that took hold in the U.S. more than 100 years ago in an effort to stem masturbation.

The medical argument in favor of circumcision is that it affords better hygiene and reduces the chances of infection.

Cohen, who is himself circumcised, disputes that statement, but even so, says "it's not part of normal health care to cut things off."

He says circumcisions have been around for 6,000 years, based on research, and were performed by the Egyptians as part of initiation rituals. Similar initiation circumcisions continued today in Africa.

Judaism popularized infant circumcision, he says, and it's become an American custom even though the majority of the world is not circumcised.

He says it reduces penis sensitivity and removes the natural protective layer of skin.

"Parents aren't given enough information, they're just simply asked if they want to have it done or not," Cohen said, adding that often the status of the father is the determining factor in the decision.

"Shouldn't a boy have the choice of whether or not to have it done without having it forced upon him," asks Cohen. "It comes down to custom. It is now just what's customary in the United States."

Do you support circumcision? Please answer our poll question and elaborate in the comment section below.