NEW ORLEANS — An injunction blocking Louisiana's law requiring women seeking abortions to delay the procedure at least 24 hours was extended for a week Thursday, abortion rights activists said.

U.S. District Judge Maree Landis extended his order blocking enforcement of the law, which was scheduled to take effect Sept. 18.

The law is now effective at 6 a.m. Sept. 23, according to the Center for Reproductive Law & Policy.

The New York-based firm sued the state June 21 to halt enforcement of the mandatory delay, which took effect immediately upon the governor's signature June 20.

Kathryn Kolbert, vice president of the center, said Thursday's hearing was necessary to ensure "there be an orderly implementation of this law."

"The materials are at the printer and ready for distribution," she said. "The extra week gives them an opportunity to distribute the material to physicians across the state."

According to the law passed by the 1995 Legislature, a woman must participate in a face-to-face session with a physician at least 24 hours prior to obtaining an abortion.

During that session, the woman must get counseling from a doctor or "qualified person," and be given printed materials that describe the characteristics of a fetus throughout pregnancy and receive information on services and agencies that may be available to her should she carry her pregnancy to term.

The center, in a news release, said the state plans to send the brochures to every hospital, obstetrician-gynecologist, family practice physician, general practice physician and ambulatory surgical center in Louisiana, as well as to physicians who provide abortions.

Kolbert said physicians should know that the law allows them to provide the state-mandated information when a woman seeking an abortion first comes in to receive a pregnancy test.

"That's what we're hoping the physician will do, provide the appropriate information at the first visit so the woman can avoid two trips to a facility," Kolbert said. "If they do that it will be better for the woman."

If a woman is referred to another doctor for an abortion, she must provide a form signed by the original doctor indicating she had been through the counseling session.