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Ousted CEO of Lubbock's Planned Parenthood speaks out

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By Abby Reed - [email](#)

LUBBOCK, TX (KCBD) - The CEO and President of Lubbock's Planned Parenthood is speaking out following his arrest for indecent exposure.

Tony Thornton, 56, was arrested Monday afternoon, after police say he exposed his genitals at a baseball field in Mackenzie Park. He was arrested for indecent exposure. According to jail records, he posted a \$750 bond just after 11 a.m. Tuesday.

A representative named Elizabeth Toledo, who works for Camino Public Relations, issued a statement on behalf of Tony Thornton:

"For more than nine years, I have proudly devoted my professional life to ensuring that the Lubbock community has access to the high quality reproductive health care they are seeking, including life-saving cancer screenings, birth control, prevention and treatment of STD's, breast health services, pap tests, sexual health education, information and health counseling. I deeply regret creating a situation in my personal life that potentially creates a distraction from these goals, and I apologize to the people in the Lubbock community for the incident. I will work with my attorney through the appropriate court process to correct any misinformation and take responsibility for errors.

Due to developments in recent months and in light of the recent incident, my Board and I have agreed to an immediate leave of absence and they have appointed an interim CEO, Tara Haskell. I am grateful to Tara for her leadership, and to all women's health supporters who continue to focus on the urgent need to ensure that women, men and teens in Lubbock have access to high quality essential health care."

Toledo also sent a statement from Lubbock's Planned Parenthood Board Chair Mariah Sharpe:

"Effective immediately Tony Thornton has been placed on leave and will no longer serve as the CEO of Planned Parenthood of Lubbock, following his arrest related to a personal matter. Tara Haskell, formerly the Director of Finance, will immediately take over as interim CEO of Planned Parenthood of Lubbock. Planned Parenthood insists on the highest professional standards, and we will continue to provide essential quality health care to the Lubbock community without interruption."

According to the receptionist who answered the telephone at Planned Parenthood's office Wednesday afternoon, there was no contact information for Mariah Sharpe. The receptionist said she had no way to get in touch with Sharpe.

Tuesday evening, KCBD NewsChannel 11 went to Thornton's home, but he did not answer the door.

According to Texas Penal Code 21.08, indecent exposure is committed when a suspect exposes his genitals with the intent to arouse the sexual desire of another person. It's a class B misdemeanor.

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Tony Thornton, 56 (Provided by Lubbock County Sheriff)