

Louisville's Planned Parenthood clinic now providing abortion services; Gov. Bevin vows to shut it down

By [Joe Sonka](#) | January 28, 2016 3:27 pm

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The new Planned Parenthood clinic in downtown Louisville

Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky CEO Betty Cockrum tells IL that their [new clinic](#) in downtown Louisville is now performing abortions for patients, marking the first time any of their clinics in Kentucky have provided that service.

The decision was made on Jan. 1 to start providing abortion services at the Louisville clinic later in the month, and those services have now begun.

“We looked at the need in the Louisville area and concluded that our whole array of reproductive health services should include abortion services as well, and that will include surgical and nonsurgical,” said Cockrum.

The Planned Parenthood clinic will now be the second abortion provider in Louisville, along with the downtown EMW Women’s Surgical Center on Market Street. The only other clinic providing this service in Kentucky is located in Lexington, and it does so on a part-time basis.

The Louisville Planned Parenthood clinic now offers nonsurgical abortions for women up to 8 weeks and 6 days of their pregnancy term, and a 13-week, 6-day window for surgical abortions. Cockrum said those services will be in addition to the many birth control and preventative health care services they currently offer.

“We do what Planned Parenthood clinics across the entire affiliate do in Louisville, which is testicular, breast and cervical cancer screenings and testing, all kinds of birth control products, including long-acting reversible contraception, testing and treatment for HIV and STDs,” said Cockrum. “If we diagnose in a pre-cancerous circumstance with potential for cervical cancer — which is a huge problem in Kentucky – we’re able to offer procedures that would arrest that pre-cancerous circumstance.”

Planned Parenthood has been the target of anti-abortion conservatives in Frankfort this month, as a bill in the state Senate seeks to [prohibit federal Title X family planning funds](#) from passing through local health departments to Planned Parenthood clinics in Louisville and Lexington. Gov. Matt Bevin’s new budget proposal also calls for [cutting off those funds](#).

However, Cockrum says such funds are no longer relevant to their Louisville clinic, as they recently made the decision to not accept Title X funding.

“There’s a whole variety of reasons, but when we looked at the whole array of services and the budget projections about both sides of the ledger, we were able to conclude that it makes sense,” said Cockrum. “There are reimbursement rate issues. So we are better able to more fully serve our patient base by not accepting Title X funding at that location.”

Such legislation still would affect Planned Parenthood’s family planning funding at their Lexington clinic, and Cockrum said such efforts are misinformed, as federal money is only used on family planning services and already has been prohibited from going to abortion services for decades.

“It’s a fact that women in Kentucky have really limited access to health care in general, and reproductive health care specifically,” said Cockrum. “And it’s very troubling that there continues to be any confusion about funding for Planned Parenthood specific to the provision of abortion services... it simply doesn’t exist. There’s a Hyde Amendment that precludes it,

everybody is very clear about that. And of course we are compliant, both on the funding end and on the recipient end.”

Cockrum added that cutting off family planning funds would only have the effect of causing more unplanned pregnancies, which would then lead to more abortions.

“My primary frustration is we really do wish that family planning services could be fully funded, especially for those most in need who can’t otherwise afford to pay, so that you can plan pregnancies,” said Cockrum. “It’s planning pregnancies that reduces the incidences of abortion. When I read in the last week that x number of abortions have occurred in the last 43 years, there’s the suggestion that there were no abortions before Roe v. Wade. Well, the real outcome of Roe v. Wade was that women stopped dying of abortions. That was the premise of that argument having gone to the Supreme Court in the first place. Help us educate and help us provide access, and we will all celebrate a reduction in the incidence of abortion.”

In the meantime, Cockrum said it is critically important that women have a safe, private place to go to have an abortion. Whereas the EMW clinic does not have a private parking lot — forcing women to walk past [anti-abortion protesters](#) who often harass them — the new Planned Parenthood clinic has a large, fenced-in parking lot to give them more privacy and shield them from protesters.

“We made every effort to ensure that the patients and the staff at that location are safe at all times, and that there is as much privacy as possible,” said Cockrum.

Planned Parenthood’s Lexington clinic is still receiving federal Title X funding, Cockrum said, and they have no immediate plans to add abortion services.

******* UPDATE 5:15 p.m. *******

Gov. Matt Bevin submitted a statement to IL saying this Planned Parenthood clinic is violating the law and pledging to use force to shut it down.

“They are openly and knowingly operating an unlicensed abortion facility in clear violation of the law,” said Bevin. “We will use the full force of the Commonwealth to put a stop to this. There is no room in Kentucky for this kind of blatant disregard for proper legal procedure.”

Bevin’s spokeswoman Jessica Ditto did not immediately reply to an email asking what specific license he was referring to and what law had been broken.

******* UPDATE 6:24 p.m. *******

Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky responded to Bevin in a statement to Insider Louisville, saying that they “applied for an abortion facility license and commenced services under the guidance of the Office of the Inspector General, the state office that is responsible for licensing health facilities.”

***** UPDATE 7:37 p.m. *****

In a press release sent to the media Thursday night, Bevin made the same statement given to Insider Louisville two hours earlier, but added that “According to [KRS 216B.990](#), it is against Kentucky law for a facility to perform abortions without a license. This facility is not licensed and it is breaking the law.”

Bevin’s statement did not address the claim by PPINK that the Office of the Inspector General had given them clearance to start performing abortions after applying for the license.

At a press conference in Louisville Thursday night, Bevin also [addressed](#) the Planned Parenthood situation, saying “it’s that brazen disregard for the law that is going to be hammered down.” Asked what he is going to do, Bevin replied “[stay tuned](#).”