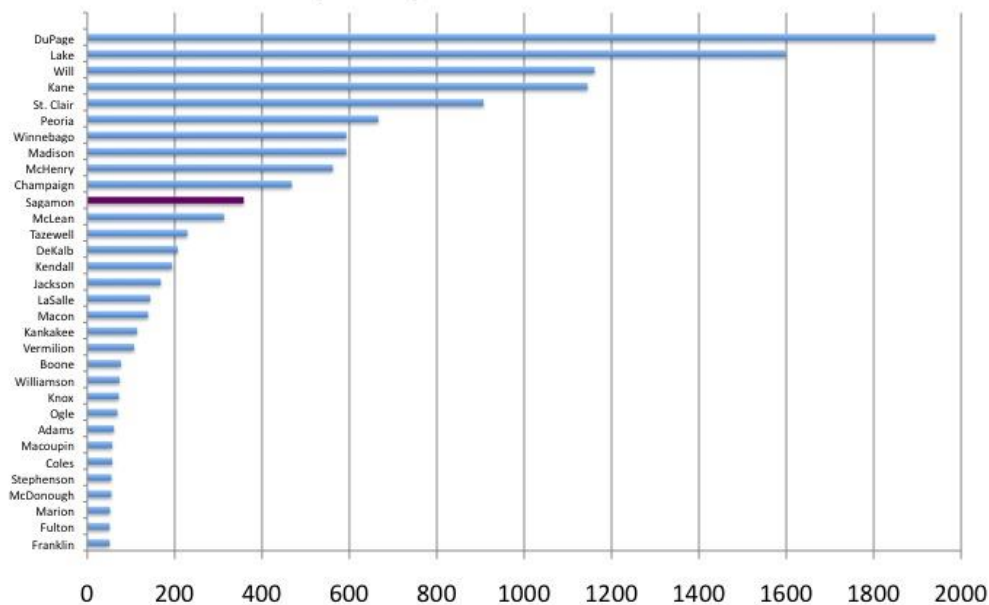


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## Reported Induced Pregnancy Terminations By County Of Residence in 2008



Excludes Cook County: 25,529 cases (67 percent of all cases in Illinois in 2008)

\*Illinois Department of Public Health

## Pill-based abortion comes to Springfield

by [Lauren Sullivan](#)  
*March 02, 2010*

Planned Parenthood of Springfield has begun offering a pill-based alternative to surgical abortions.

For Springfield, it is the first abortion service ever available. The method has drawn visceral criticism from anti-abortion groups.

Before this week, Springfield women who sought abortions – 400 a year – needed to travel 90 minutes to abortion providers in Champaign, Peoria or Granite City to receive services, according to Beth Kanter, senior vice president of external affairs for Planned Parenthood of Illinois.

“We took a holistic look at abortion statistics in the state,” Kanter said. “Springfield is a high priority. Sangamon County has the highest birth rates in the state, including teen birth rates.”

Of the 17 Planned Parenthood facilities in Illinois, only five offer abortion services. Springfield is the third to provide the take-home pill. Champaign and the downtown Chicago facility are the other two locations.

“Springfield was the seventh-largest metropolitan area in the country with a Planned Parenthood but no abortion provider,” Kanter said. “And nearly half of the total births reported in the area are unintended. There is a great need in that community.”

But anti-abortion groups disagree.

“Abortion services are not good for a community nor are they good for women,” said Shirley Caldwell Smith, president of Springfield’s anti-abortion rights group Right to Life.

“We’ve known for some time that the local Planned Parenthood wanted to do abortions in Springfield,” she said. “But the climate wasn’t conducive. So they’ve decided they can get by with the chemical abortions – just another income stream for them.”

The medication abortion is a \$435 alternative to an in-clinic procedure, which can range between \$350 and \$900 during the first trimester.

The procedure is a two-step process. The first pill, containing mifepristone, or RU-486, is administered at the clinic and a second, containing misoprostol, is taken at home. The termination process takes about 48 hours and has side effects similar to a miscarriage.

The Food and Drug Administration in 2000 approved the alternative method, which has met more criticism than the surgical procedure.

“Abortion is abortion, whether it’s surgical or medical,” said Eric Scheidler, executive director of the Pro-Life Action League. “In some ways the pill is more disturbing. The agent conducting the abortion is the mother herself. And she delivers a dead baby.”

Planned Parenthood argues that the pill form simply increases the level of privacy during a highly personal experience, Kanter said.

Scheidler sees it differently.

“High school cafeterias, apartment and restaurants,” he said. “Everywhere becomes an abortion facility because of how it works.”

In addition, there are health concerns. “These are dangerous drugs that cause harm,” Scheidler said. “This is one more sign of the fact that Planned Parenthood is not ultimately as concerned about women’s health as they are pill distributions.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has investigated deaths of women that may have been linked to the abortion-triggering drug.

Abortion rights groups say that options for women are most important.

“We want to expand access to services to ensure women have reproductive health care, Kanter said. “It is a good thing.”

