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Planned Parenthood closing Easton clinic at end of month



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By **Michelle Merlin . Contact Reporter**

Of The Morning Call

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Planned Parenthood Keystone will close its Easton clinic at the end of the month, part of a consolidation plan that involves shuttering facilities in its 37-county coverage area.

The clinic, which is technically in Wilson, served 2,000 people a year and offered a range of services that included gynecological care, pill-induced abortions, contraception, testing for **sexually transmitted diseases** and LGBT services.

Melissa Reed, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Keystone, said she hopes Easton patients will go to the Planned Parenthood facility in Allentown, which will have extended hours. Patients can be seen in Easton through March 30.

The Allentown clinic also provides surgical abortions, a service that isn't offered in Easton.

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Planned Parenthood Keystone, one of three branches serving Pennsylvania, is also closing its Bristol location in Bucks County at the end of the month and consolidating it with a clinic in Bensalem. The move would leave Keystone with 10 facilities. Three other Keystone clinics closed in December. Reed said the Easton clinic's five staff members were offered other jobs in the organization.

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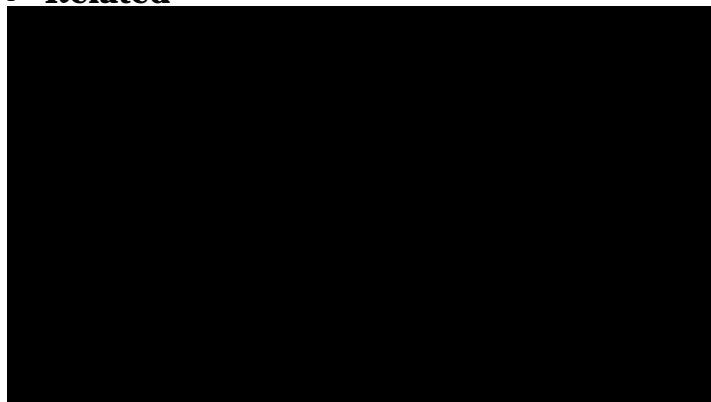
Reed said the closures are part of a market analysis started in August that looked at where the clinics are located and whether those locations made sense.



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organization's federal funds because it provides abortion services. In the face of such funding loss, Planned Parenthood has vowed to continue on in some form.

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to open a clinic at the Two River Health and Wellness Foundation building at 1101 Northampton St.

Executive Director Melissa Miranda said the clinic will provide all the same services Planned Parenthood provided, except for abortions, and will also provide services on a sliding fee scale.

She said Planned Parenthood's closure will be a loss for Northampton County.

"If we had health centers that are really close together and competing in the same market, it doesn't make sense to have two buildings to support," she said.

She said the changes aren't related to the Republican control of the White House and Congress, **which has given weight to long-time threats to pull the**

Reed has said that the organization plays an important role in giving Medicaid recipients and other economically disadvantaged people access to health care. It charges for services on a sliding scale and uses Title X funding to provide family planning services to the uninsured.

A new health clinic is slated to open April 5 in Easton's West Ward, and it will be able to serve those patients. Neighborhood Health Centers of the Lehigh Valley **received federal funding**

"It's going to create a vacuum," she said. "I'm happy, as a community health nurse, that NHCLV might be able to help fill or at least be available to help meet some of that need, but until the community is aware of us and the other resources that might be available, a lot of people will have to find their way to Allentown or go without."

PLANNED PARENTHOOD KEYSTONE

- One of three Planned Parenthood branches in state.
- Serves 37 counties with 12 clinics, 10 in April.
- Provides abortions in Allentown, Harrisburg, Reading, Warminster and York.
- Also offers regular gynecological exams, family planning, sex education and screening for cancer and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Medicaid payments to Keystone make up about \$2 million, or 30 percent of its budget.
- Statewide, Planned Parenthood receives about \$11 million in Medicaid payments and serves about 30,000 Medicaid patients each year

Sources: Planned Parenthood Keystone, plannedparenthood.org

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