

Bloomington Clinic Begins Medication Abortions

By [Judith Valente](#) • 18 hours ago



A demonstration in front of the Supreme Court last year over abortion rights.

Pete Marovich / Getty Images

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The Planned Parenthood clinic in Bloomington has begun offering medication abortions for the first time.

A medication abortion consists of two pills: mifepristone and misoprostol. Patients will take the first pill at the health center and receive a second pill to take at home any time within 48 hours.

Medication abortions can only be performed within the first 10 weeks of pregnancy.

Most women will have a complete abortion within four to 24 hours of taking misoprostol, said Julie Lynn of Planned Parenthood of Illinois.

Lynn said the Bloomington clinic decided to offer this option because Planned Parenthood wants to provide a fuller range of reproductive health services to patients.

Previously, women in McLean County had to travel to other Illinois cities for an abortion.

“The reason for starting any service is to ensure our patients are getting all of the options and care that they need. That was the reason for bringing medication abortion services to Bloomington,” Lynn said.

The Bloomington clinic still does not offer surgical abortions, which can be performed up to 19 weeks into a pregnancy. For that procedure, women have to go to Chicago, Decatur, Urbana or another city where those procedures are offered.

Lynn described medication abortions as “effective and safe.”

“For people who are eight weeks pregnant or less, it works about 98 out of 100 times, and for eight to nine weeks, it’s 96 to 100 times” effective, Lynn said.

She said there is no waiting period for women seeking abortions in Illinois, as there is in some other states.

There will be a [panel discussion on reproductive rights in Illinois](#) on Wednesday night at the Normal Public Library. Panelists include Rianne Hawkins of Planned Parenthood of Illinois and Jenna Prochaska of the ACLU of Illinois. The program is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of McLean County and the ACLU of Illinois.

Planned Parenthood has been the target of both the Trump administration and Congressional Republicans. Efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act earlier this year included measures to eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood.

Earlier this month, the Department of Health and Human Services issued a [new rule making it easier for employers to opt out of providing health care coverage for contraception](#), currently required under the ACA.

Previously, only church employers, religiously affiliated organizations and closely-held private businesses were allowed to opt out on religious grounds. Employees, however, are still able to receive contraception coverage directly from their employer’s insurance provider.

Although no federal funds are used to pay for abortions, Planned Parenthood has long been a target of pro-life groups and some political leaders because it offers abortions. However, not all Planned Parenthood clinics perform abortions, and they represent “a small part” of Planned Parenthood’s work, Lynn said.

Planned Parenthood offers gynecological testing, breast cancer screening, contraception, sexually transmitted disease testing and hormone therapy, among other services.

The Bloomington clinic had 4,000 patient visits last year and did 200 cancer screenings. Planned Parenthood also serves a large number of Medicaid patients.

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