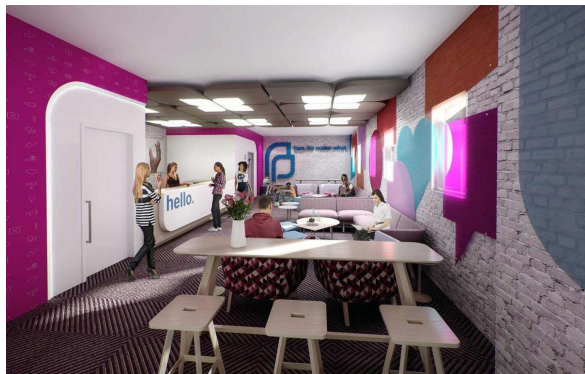




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Planned Parenthood opening second Richmond location in East End

By MARK ROBINSON Richmond Times-Dispatch Sep 20, 2018



The Virginia League of Planned Parenthood plans to break ground on its second location in the city limits by the end of the year. Above is a rendering of the new facility's waiting room. COURTESY OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD

The Virginia League for Planned Parenthood aims to open a new facility in the East End next year, an expansion the nonprofit believes will double the number of people to whom it can provide care annually.

The nonprofit has already bought property in the neighborhood and plans a \$5 million investment there, said its president and CEO, Paulette McElwain, in an interview Thursday. It finalized its plans for the location — its second in the region and sixth in the state — after the Virginia General Assembly expanded Medicaid coverage to thousands earlier this year.

"There's really a dearth of access to reproductive health care up there," McElwain said of the neighborhood, home to some of the city's poorest residents. "There's a lot of folks that are about to be insured that don't have access to doctors."

McElwain would not share where in the neighborhood the new facility would open, but said the nonprofit plans to open the facility next summer.

The clinic will have 12 examination rooms, five more than its existing location, at 201 N. Hamilton St. Like the existing location, the East End clinic will offer primary care for visitors, birth control, STD testing and sex education. It will also perform abortions.

McElwain projected the new clinic will tally 20,000 visits a year, on par with what its West End location logged last year. The nonprofit is raising money for the facility and is more than halfway to its goal, she said.

In seeking a second location in the city limits, the nonprofit also considered Manchester, the fast-growing South Richmond neighborhood. But about a third of the West End location's visitors travel across the city for care from the East End, she said. For those without a car, that can mean an hourlong bus ride.

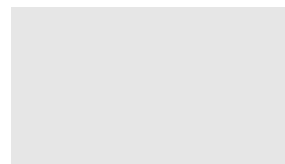
"That's a long way to go just to get your birth control prescription," McElwain said.

The trip time alone can be a deterrent for some, said Dr. Shanthy Ramesh, affiliate medical director for the Virginia League for Planned Parenthood.

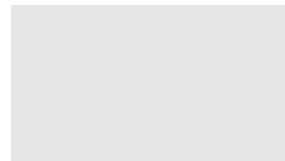
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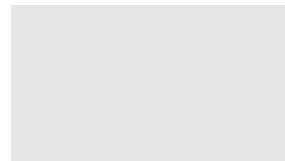
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"They may often wait until their conditions are very serious or advanced rather than have someone locally who they can see for preventative visits and early care," Ramesh said.

The nonprofit has worked closely with businessman and philanthropist Steve Markel while mulling the location, McElwain said. Markel has partnered with the city on the construction of a grocery store at the intersection of 25th Street and Nine Mile Road, a key piece of revitalization efforts along the corridor that were set in motion under former Mayor Dwight C. Jones.

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College is opening a culinary school along the strip. The Bon Secours Richmond Health System has expanded its services in the neighborhood as part of the effort, too.

The investment is meant to coincide with the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority's long-term plan to redevelop the Creighton Court public housing community.

Planned Parenthood has done preliminary outreach in the East End, among civic associations, nonprofits and other care providers, McElwain said. The reception has been positive, she added.

The nonprofit has not yet submitted designs to the city, but it aims to break ground on the facility by the end of the year.

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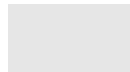
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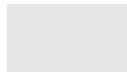


Mark Robinson
Mark Robinson covers Richmond City Hall.

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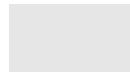
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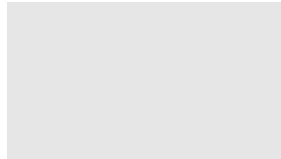
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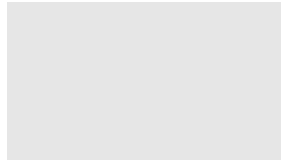
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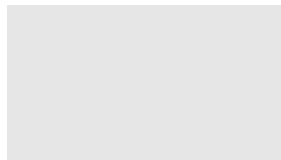
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