

NEWS

Planned Parenthood South Texas expands abortion services in San Antonio

Lauren Caruba

Feb. 15, 2019 | Updated: Feb. 15, 2019 6:27 p.m.



Jeffrey Hons, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood South Texas, gives a tour of its clinic on San Pedro Avenue. Hons was standing next to a vaginal sonogram machine. Planned Parenthood South Texas is now offering abortion services at its San Pedro location near Tobin Hill, which previously offered only family planning services and other ...

Photo: Kin Man Hui /Staff photographer

After the recent closure of an abortion clinic in southeast San Antonio, one of the city's two remaining abortion providers is expanding services at its near-downtown location.

Planned Parenthood South Texas last week began offering abortion services at its clinic on San Pedro Avenue, near Tobin Hill, following renovations of the building. Previously, the provider had performed abortions only at its Medical Center location and had offered other sexual health services at its four other locations in the city. The provider also operates in Brownsville and Harlingen.

The change comes weeks after Whole Woman's Health, the provider that has spearheaded court battles against Texas' abortion laws, announced that it had shuttered its clinic in southeast San Antonio at the end of 2018 due to a lack of business. The closure left the city with two abortion providers, Planned Parenthood South Texas and Alamo Women's Reproductive Services.

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Jeffrey Hons, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood South Texas, said the clinic on San Pedro was outfitted to provide a full range of services near the city's geographic center and "equidistant from the greatest number of people in the city."

"We wanted to have a larger footprint and increase our service delivery capacity in this kind of central part of the city," he said.

Planned Parenthood South Texas began seeing patients at the San Pedro location in April 2017, after relocating from space it was renting nearby on West Ashby Place. The building is split into adjoining suites, with one side licensed for abortions and the other providing various services, including contraception, testing for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, fertility assistance and cervical cancer screenings.

The clinic also provides assistance to economically disadvantaged patients by charging on a sliding scale, Hons said.

Last year, the San Pedro clinic served nearly 2,800 patients, care that included more than 3,700 tests for sexually transmitted diseases, almost 540 cervical cancer screenings and the distribution of more than 5,100 contraceptive units, according to data from the provider. In 2018, its Medical Center clinic performed 1,453 abortions, 74 percent of which were administered with medication.

By expanding services, Hons said the provider hopes to serve more patients at the San Pedro location.

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In 2015, Planned Parenthood South Texas opened a \$6.5 million clinic on Babcock Road, space that includes an ambulatory surgical center for abortions and a health center.

The clinic opened a year before the U.S. Supreme Court struck down key portions of Texas' House Bill 2, which would have required abortion providers to meet the standards of ambulatory surgical centers and employ physicians who have hospital admitting privileges. More than half of the state's abortion clinics closed in response to the law.

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