



Planned Parenthood opens Illi 'mega-clinic' secretly built to counter tough Missouri anti- abortion law

BY OWEN DAUGHERTY - 10/02/19 08:37 AM EDT

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Planned Parenthood announced the opening of a new 18,000 square-foot clinic in southern Illinois on Wednesday after more than a year of secretly building the facility.

The new clinic in Illinois is just 13 miles from Missouri's last remaining abortion clinic, located in St. Louis.

CBS News reports that Planned Parenthood used a shell company to build the massive facility, leaving no sign as to who was behind the operation.

Colleen McNicholas, chief medical officer of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri, told the news outlet that the facility was built secretly to avoid protestors and possible delays in construction.

"We were really intentional and thoughtful about making sure that we were able to complete this project as expeditiously as possible because we saw the writing on the wall — patients need better access, so we wanted to get it open as quickly as we could," McNicholas said.

CBS News reports it first visited the facility in August while it was under construction. The completion of the project comes as Missouri's last

VIEW ALL

abortion clinic is locked in a legal battle after the state's health department refused to renew its license.

A law passed earlier this year in Missouri would ban abortions in the state after eight weeks, one of the most restrictive measures nationwide. A federal judge in August [temporarily blocked](#) the law.

CBS News notes that as several states have enacted more restrictive abortion laws, Illinois is trending in the other direction by expanding abortion access and loosening restrictions. The state earlier this year passed the Reproductive Health Act, which establishes access to abortion as a fundamental right.

The new Illinois facility is expected to start taking patients later this month. McNicholas said she expects an influx of patients coming to the new clinic from Missouri.

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