
Planned Parenthood Will Open a New Dallas Abortion Clinic to Clear Texas' New Hurdles

STEPHEN YOUNG | JULY 15, 2014 | 3:45PM

Planned Parenthood plans to open a new clinic in southern Dallas that will meet the stringent requirements imposed on abortion providers by the state of Texas, ensuring that Dallas has at least one clinic that can perform abortions under the new rules.

The regulations, which were passed in the Wendy Davis-filibustered Senate Bill 5 and take effect this fall, require any clinic wishing to provide the procedure to be a certified ambulatory surgical center. The requirements include specific sizes for rooms and doorways, separate locker rooms for male and female employees as well as backup generators and an air sterilization system. Of the 21 Texas health service providers that perform abortions, seven, including the new Planned Parenthood, will meet the new standards.

Numerous medical organizations have said that the standards are unnecessary. The **statement excerpted below**, issued by The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in opposition to SB5, is representative:

For example, the bills would require physicians who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles, allowing abortions only in surgical clinics and setting a higher standard than for other procedures with similar low risk such as colonoscopy. The fact is that abortion is one of the safest medical procedures. The risk of complications from abortion is minimal, with less than 0.5% of abortions involving major complications.

Sarah Wheat, Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas' Vice President for Community Affairs, says the restrictions don't do anything but make it harder for women to access health care.

"It's a new strategy by anti-choice groups," she says. "It's not necessary for the safety of our patients, but it's a real challenge to construct and to operate an ambulatory surgical center."

The new facility, located in South Dallas, was purchased by Planned Parenthood as part of a plan to maintain health-care access for women despite the new restrictions. Other parts of the plan include providing money for birth control and travel for women who can no longer easily get to clinics, as well as renovating existing Planned Parenthoods, Wheat says.

The new clinic isn't scheduled to open until the staff is moved to the new location sometime next month. Eventually it will handle all Planned Parenthood-provided abortions in the city. The organization's current Dallas provider, on Greenville Avenue, does not meet the ambulatory surgery center requirements.

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