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Planned Parenthood reopens in Clackamas County

Raymond Rendleman Monday, October 12, 2015



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When the Planned Parenthood office opened for the first time in Oak Grove on the morning on Sept. 29, it didn't come as a complete surprise to officials that 15 people were waiting outside hoping to be seen for reproductive health care.

According to the Oregon Health Authority's 2012 edition of Clackamas County Family Planning Facts, the region is home to more than 18,000 women and girls who may require public assistance for services to avoid unintended pregnancies, based on their age and income status.

Stacy M. Cross, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Columbia-Willamette, said that need is especially concentrated in the three ZIP codes surrounding the new health center at 14411 S.E. McLoughlin Blvd.

Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette celebrated the opening of its new Milwaukie-Oak Grove Health Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house on Monday. Speakers at the event included Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici.



PHOTO BY: ANDIE PETKUS - Planned Parenthood of Columbia-Willamette CEO Stacey Cross and Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici cut the ribbon before welcoming the community to the new clinic in Oak Grove.

Milwaukie City Councilor Lisa Batey said, "When women are healthier, families are healthier. And when families are healthier, communities are healthier. I'm thrilled to welcome Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette to our area."

Planned Parenthood was in Clackamas on 82nd Drive until 2014, when the organization closed three local clinics for financial reasons, including the decreasing number of women being required to get an annual exam in order to obtain birth control. Cross said that Planned Parenthood began immediate plans during the closure process to open a Clackamas County clinic with an improved design in a better location.

Planned Parenthood's Milwaukie-Oak Grove Health Center employs the full-time equivalent of 15 local jobs and hopes to provide health services to 7,000 Clackamas County residents annually. With



PHOTO BY: JAIME VALDEZ - Although abortion is among the services that Planned Parenthood provides, it represents a small fraction of the reasons that patients seek care there.

providers working full-time, it could see up to 10,800 patients annually in its nine exam rooms, counseling

room and lab.

Like the six other local Planned Parenthood centers, the clinic offers birth control, HIV testing, cancer screenings, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, breast health services, and annual exams. Planned Parenthood provides more vasectomies across the state than any other organization, and 10.5 percent of its total services are for men. In January, local Planned Parenthood clinics will kick off offering transition hormone therapy for transitioning people.

Patients' primary reason for visiting local Planned Parenthood clinicians is 74 percent for family planning (birth control, annual exams, pregnancy testing); 17 percent testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases; 6 percent abortion services (surgical and medication), and 3 percent other nonfamily planning services.

It's that 6 percent that raises the hackles of a vocal minority who personally oppose abortion. The Great Taste Restaurant in Oak Grove was remodeled so that patients can enter the 3,600-square-foot Planned Parenthood clinic from its rear entrance near the parking lot, away from picketers in front of the clinic. As the clinic opened, the national president of Planned Parenthood voluntarily faced a congressional hearing.

"There are certain people who, no matter how much information we give them, they're never going to



PHOTO BY: JAIME VALDEZ - Protesters have taken up residence in front of the new Planned Parenthood clinic on McLoughlin Boulevard.

change their mind," Cross said. "What we're seeing right now is without a doubt a very politically motivated attack."

Oregon is the only state in the nation that doesn't have any restrictions to reproductive health care. Planned Parenthood is thankful to local voters and activists for rejecting 24-hour waiting periods for abortions and parental notification laws that don't take into account people who are in abusive situations.

"Oregon voters have made it clear that they want the state to remain a leader on reproductive freedom," Cross said. "It doesn't happen by luck, it happens because we have great staff and volunteers to protect women's rights."

In May 2014, Planned Parenthood celebrated the release of a report issued showing Oregon's historic low rate in teen pregnancy, thanks to access to affordable birth control and medically accurate, age-appropriate sexual health education. Cross said that the staff educator at the Oak Grove clinic, as is the case for the educators based at the

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other six centers, is available to go out and talk with school groups, provide peer-to-peer education, or attend local health fairs.

“The two things that really make a difference to prevent unintended pregnancy is access to information and access to birth control,” Cross said.

TriMet bus routes 29, 32, 33 and 34 serve the center. To make an appointment, call 888-576-7526.

PHOTO BY: JAIME VALDEZ - For the privacy of patients, Planned Parenthood's clinic in Oak Grove features a waiting room facing the parking lot.

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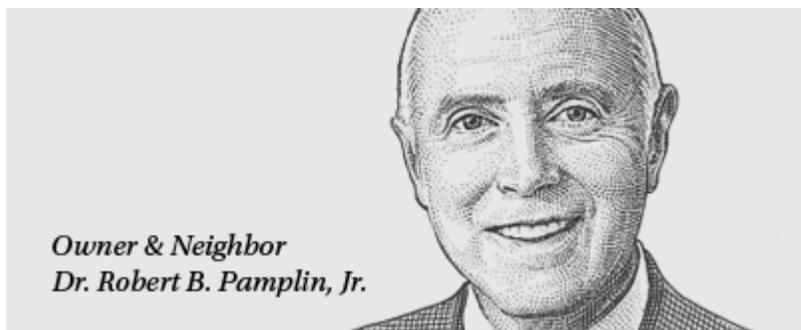
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