



Texas abortion providers fear major shutdowns

AP

RAMIT PLUSHNICK-MASTI, Associated Press • July 13, 2013



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HOUSTON (AP) — Dr. Howard Novick winces as he recalls treating two and three women a week for infections and complications from botched abortions. It was the early 1970s, before the procedure was legalized, and the experience persuaded him to devote his life to this area of medicine.

Now, more than 40 years later, new abortion restrictions passed by the Texas Legislature could force Novick to close the Houston abortion clinic he opened in 1980 because, he says, he does not have \$1 million to \$1.5 million to convert his run-of-the-mill medical office into a fully loaded surgical center with wide corridors and sophisticated air-flow systems.

"I have saved some women's lives. They are so grateful we're here for them and nonjudgmental," Novick said. "I really feel a kinship for this."

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who perform them to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals, dictates when abortion pills are taken and bans abortions after 20 weeks unless the woman's life is in imminent danger.

Abortion-rights advocates argue the costs associated with converting clinics into surgical centers are so high they will force more than 35 clinics to close, possibly leaving only a handful of facilities across the vast state. In rural areas such as the farthest reaches of West Texas or the Rio Grande Valley, that could put the closest facility 300 or more miles away.

The law could also create a backlog so great in the remaining clinics that women seeking abortions will miss the 20-week deadline, said Amy Hagstrom Miller, president and CEO of Whole Woman's Health, a company that runs five clinics in Texas.

Abortion opponents insist, however, that the new rules are designed to guarantee the best health care.

"All we're asking for is better surgical care for women

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