

# Appleton Planned Parenthood suspends abortions

**Ethan Safran**, USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 7:39 a.m. CT Oct. 27, 2015 | Updated 7:04 p.m. CT Oct. 27, 2015



(Photo: Danny Damiani/Post-Crescent Medi, Danny Damiani/Post-Crescent Medi)

APPLETON — Planned Parenthood has suspended abortion services at its Appleton North health center for six months, the organization announced.

The decision for the center, located at 3800 North Gillett St., is due to a "temporary gap in medical coverage," Teri Huyck, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, said in a statement. Its family planning center at 508 W. Wisconsin Ave. will remain open.

Patients in need of abortion services will be referred to health centers in Madison and Milwaukee, the organization said. Iris Riis, a spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood Wisconsin, said there has not been an increase in abortions at the other health centers.

"It is too early to determine the full impact on patients in need, but we are doing all we can to minimize the impact of this temporary change on our patients," Huyck said.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, a nonprofit research organization, 89 percent of all U.S. counties lacked an abortion clinic in 2011, and 38 percent of women of reproductive age in the U.S. live in those counties.

The services at the Appleton North health center, which performed 583 abortions in 2014, stopped on Oct. 14. There are no plans to move the Appleton health center to another location, and the decision is unrelated to ongoing legislative scrutiny against Planned Parenthood, Riis said.

The organization found itself in the national spotlight this summer following a series of undercover videos released by an anti-abortion group. Planned Parenthood claims the videos were selectively edited and misleading.

"We have seen that clinic closures lead to burdens for women in a variety of states," said Jenny Higgins, an assistant professor in gender and women's studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a board member with the Guttmacher Institute. "This is true for Planned Parenthood, but is also true for any clinic that offers abortion care."

In Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood provides services for 60,000 Wisconsin patients at 22 health centers. In July, Gov. Scott Walker signed legislation banning abortions in Wisconsin after 20 weeks.

"Women face a number of barriers of getting to a clinic, and we've seen studies that the more miles away a clinic is, the more difficult it is for a patient," Higgins said. "I imagine that the closure, even if temporary, of this clinic will only serve as another reproductive health burden to women in the state of Wisconsin."

Nationwide, Planned Parenthood receives nearly \$500 million a year from the federal government to provide a number of services, including contraception, cancer screenings and STD testing. Taxpayer money is not used to pay for abortions, which make up about 3 percent of the organization's services.

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