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**Kansas**

## Wichita abortion clinic founder steps aside

By **Brad Cooper** - September 2, 2021

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The founder of one of a handful of abortion clinics in Kansas has stepped aside as chief executive officer to undertake other efforts in the reproductive rights movement.

Julie Burkhart quietly left her position at Trust Women on July 9 after founding the organization in 2009.

“It was time to let other people lead this organization,” Burkhart said.

“It’s time for me to go on and do other things that I’ve been wanting to do.”

Burkhart is now president of Circle of Hope Health Care Services, a new national startup organization that will seek to expand access to abortion.

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Trust Women is now in the hands of co-executive directors: Rebecca Tong, who has been with the organization since 2013, and Schaunta James-Boyd, former CEO of the E.C. Tyree Health and Dental Clinic where she worked for 19 years.

Burkhart, who once chaired a political action committee affiliated with late-term abortion provider George Tiller, started with two abortion clinics and acquired a third.

Trust Women provided abortion services at clinics in Wichita and Oklahoma City and another in Seattle that is now closed.

The Tiller political action committee that Burkhart chaired – ProKanDo – backed candidates who supported abortion rights and lobbied against efforts to limit the procedure.

The PAC helped elect former Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and defeat Phill Kline in his 2006 race for attorney general.

In 2013, Burkhart reopened Tiller’s old Wichita clinic, which closed in 2009 after the physician was murdered at his church.

Burkhart has been involved in a several legal battles over abortion rights as the CEO of Trust Women, including one in Kansas over whether medical abortions could be provided using long-distance video technology.

Last year, Burkhart [challenged an executive order](#) issued by the Oklahoma governor suspending elective surgeries, including [abortions](#) unless they were determined to be a medical emergency or were necessary to save the life of the mother.

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