

Whole Woman's Health officially announces South Bend abortion clinic plans



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SOUTH BEND, Ind. (WNDU) Texas-based Whole Woman's Health has officially announced its plans to open a new abortion clinic in South Bend.

We first reported earlier this month that the group applied for a license to operate out of a building in the 3500 block of Lincolnway West.

Whole Woman's Health says it plans on opening the South Bend clinic as soon as possible.

Recently, U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski asked the state health department to reject the group's application, saying that St. Joseph County has seen a "tremendous" reduction of abortions in recent years.

Whole Woman's Health says abortions are just one of the services they provide to women.

From Whole Woman's Health:

Today, Amy Hagstrom Miller, founder and owner of Whole Woman's Health, announces her latest endeavor to open two new abortion clinics in South Bend, Indiana and Charlottesville, Virginia under a non-profit Whole Woman's Health Alliance (WWHA). Hagstrom Miller operates independent abortion clinics in five states, including Texas where she won a major victory for women and families in the 2016 case, Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt, the most consequential abortion rights case to go to the Supreme Court in a generation.

Both Indiana and Virginia are classified as "extremely hostile" to abortion rights, having passed new laws in recent years to burden women seeking abortion and force clinics to close. In 2014, some 95 percent of Indiana counties had no clinics that provided abortion care and 66 percent of Indiana women lived in those counties. Indiana now has only six clinics open to serve women in the state, dropping from 10 in 2011.

In 2014, Virginia had only 18 abortion clinics, representing a 14 percent decline in clinics from 2011. Now Virginia has just 13 open clinics. In 2014, some 92 percent of Virginia counties had no clinics that provide abortion, and 78 percent of Virginia women lived in those counties.

"As we witness ongoing attempts by the Trump administration to bully and block women who need abortion care, I'm proud to announce that we are expanding our healthcare work, to open two new nonprofit clinics. Whole Woman's Health Charlottesville opened in October 2017, and we will open the clinic in South Bend as soon as we can. These two clinics play a key role in the Whole Woman's Health Alliance launch of a nationwide initiative to combat abortion stigma," said Amy Hagstrom Miller, founder and CEO of Whole Woman's Health and Whole Woman's Health Alliance. "Nearly a year after the election of the most anti-abortion administration in decades, Whole Woman's Health Alliance is doubling down on what we do best: providing compassionate holistic care and proclaiming loudly and proudly that every day, good women have abortions. We will go where they need us the most."

"We are so excited to welcome Whole Woman's Health into the Commonwealth, where they will continue to fearlessly care for women and families. And if I know anything about Amy Hagstrom Miller and her team – they won't let intimidation from anti-choice legislators or political battles slow them down," said Tarina Keene, Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia. "Whole Woman's Health has been a bastion of hope for women seeking honest, compassionate, effective abortion care for years. They inspired us to introduce a whole new wave of proactive legislation here in Virginia after Amy took on the state of Texas and TRAP laws in the landmark Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt case, in which the Supreme Court ruled that medically-unnecessary regulations that impose an undue burden on a woman's access to abortion are unconstitutional. Charlottesville women and families are lucky to have such a great team bringing reproductive health care to their city, and we're thrilled to be one step closer to eliminating gaps in access to abortion in Virginia."

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"At All-Options, we believe that everyone has the right to be supported in their decisions about pregnancy, parenting, abortion, and adoption. That includes having access to quality, safe abortion care without significant financial or geographic barriers," said Shelly Dodson, Center Director of All-Options in Indiana. "We are thrilled that Whole Woman's Health will be opening a clinic in South Bend, and look forward to having another provider to refer clients to in Indiana, reducing their need to travel out of state to find the abortion care they need."

"Virginians know that a woman seeking reproductive health care, including safe and legal abortion, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. These are just the values Amy Hagstrom Miller and Whole Woman's Health bring to their provision of health care and we couldn't be more thrilled to welcome them to Charlottesville," said Anna Scholl, Executive Director for Progress Virginia. "Just a year after our hard-fought victory to roll back Virginia's sham restrictions on abortion providers, it's so gratifying to know that Virginia women now have an additional option for quality, compassionate, affordable reproductive health care access, and a fierce advocate for women's dignity and autonomy to boot."

