

Local Planned Parenthood chapter drops affiliation

National organization requiring affiliate offices to perform abortions

By Sara Foley

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CORPUS CHRISTI — The local chapter of Planned Parenthood will drop its affiliation with the national organization and take a new name beginning Jan. 1.

Clients shouldn't notice any changes in prices or services other than the office changing its name to Family Planning of the Coastal Bend, CEO Amanda Stukenberg said.

Planned Parenthood wanted to standardize its operations at all of its agencies nationwide, Stukenberg said.

That included a new requirement for all affiliates to perform abortions, something the Coastal Bend office didn't see as necessary because of abortion services offered by local doctors, Stukenberg said.

"We have never provided abortions," she said. "Our position is that if that is a need in your community, fine. There are far greater needs in our area than abortion. We feel that women here have options. We don't need to duplicate services."

It's unclear how many Planned Parenthood affiliates are following the local chapter's lead. National officials couldn't be reached for comment Monday.

The Coastal Bend office focuses on education and sexual health, including an expanded focus on men's health, Stukenberg said.

The local chapter office became a model clinic for its role encouraging men to share responsibility for family planning, sexually transmitted disease prevention and preventing unwanted pregnancies, Stukenberg said. Last year, 20 percent of clinic patients were men, she said.

Clinic staffing and prices for service will remain the same, Stukenberg said.

The office's funding sources won't be affected by the change, but the local office won't have the benefit of bulk purchasing.

"We feel confident that we're financially able to do this," she said.

Planned Parenthood of South Texas was founded in 1958. The office offers physical exams, birth control, emergency contraception, pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment for urinary tract infections.

Its Holly Road clinic offers fees 50 percent to 60 percent off private physician and retail pharmacy rates and its Dillon Clinic fees are assessed on a sliding scale based on income and family size.



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