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Planned Parenthood Plans #1

Officials with Planned Parenthood of East Central Iowa confirm that discussions are underway to bring abortion services to their clinics in Dubuque and Cedar Rapids for the first time. The proposal to extend telemed abortions to five eastern Iowa counties is generating criticism from anti-abortion activists. Iowa Public Radio's Joyce Russell reports: :57 (seconds)

RUSSELL: Planned Parenthood of the Heartland already offers the new abortion method at 16 clinics which cover much of the state. Patients take the abortion pill while a doctor communicates electronically from Des Moines. Spokeswoman Jenifer Vick says Planned Parenthood of East Central Iowa also wants to offer abortion services:

VICK: Certainly we know this is a safe and effective way to expand health care services so yes, that conversation has been taking place.

RUSSELL: Last month, in an interview with Iowa Public Radio, another Planned Parenthood official said telemed abortions might be available in Cedar Rapids and Dubuque as early as this calendar year. Until now, Vick denied knowing such discussions were taking place. Vick says patients at the Dubuque clinic already regularly face anti-abortion protesters. She says it was inappropriate for her colleague to discuss the telemed abortion option when finalized plans are not in place. I'm Joyce Russell, Iowa Public Radio News.

Planned Parenthood Plans #2

A spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood of East Central Iowa confirms that discussions are underway to bring telemed abortions to the five eastern Iowa counties the organization serves, including Dubuque and Cedar Rapids. The proposal is generating opposition in the anti-abortion community, and the spokeswoman had earlier denied knowing that the talks were taking place. Iowa Public Radio's Joyce Russell reports: :52 (seconds)

RUSSELL: In an interview with Iowa Public Radio last month, the director of Patient Services at East Central Iowa Planned Parenthood described plans to partner with Planned Parenthood of the Heartland to offer telemed abortions as early as this calendar year. The sister organization already offers the service at a dozen of its clinics where patients take the medication that causes the abortion, while the doctor communicates electronically from Des Moines. Eastern Iowa spokeswoman Jennifer Vick says a lot has to happen before her clinics offer the service:

VICK: For example, board approval is one action that would have to take place and that has not happened.

RUSSELL: Vick says anti-abortion protesters appear regularly at the Dubuque clinic, and thus she was reluctant to discuss an abortion option which hasn't yet been approved. I'm Joyce Russell, Iowa Public Radio News.