

Missouri down to 1 abortion clinic amid legal battle

October 3 2018, by Summer Ballentine



In this Dec. 12, 2016, file photo, protesters hold anti-abortion signs outside the Planned Parenthood Columbia Health Center on in Columbia, Mo. Planned Parenthood Great Plains spokeswoman Emily Miller says abortions scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018, at the Columbia clinic are canceled. Federal appeals judges ruled last month that Missouri can enforce a requirement that doctors performing abortions must have admitting privileges at hospitals. The Columbia clinic hasn't met that requirement. (Timothy Tai/Columbia Daily Tribune via AP, File)

Missouri is down to one clinic providing abortions Wednesday, after the only other clinic in the state that performs the procedure failed to adhere to new state requirements.

Federal appeals [court](#) judges ruled last month that Missouri can enforce a requirement that doctors must have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals before they can perform abortions. The judges issued a mandate Monday for that rule to officially take effect.

The Columbia Planned Parenthood clinic was unable to secure physician privileges to comply with the requirement, so it cancelled abortions scheduled for Wednesday, which would have been the first since the mandate was issued, Planned Parenthood Great Plains spokeswoman Emily Miller said. The clinic continues to provide other [health care services](#).

"We are unable to provide [abortion](#) services now, so we've been working with patients who were on the schedule for today for abortion appointments to let them know what their alternatives are," Miller said.

Women seeking abortions can go to Planned Parenthood's St. Louis clinic—which is now the only facility in Missouri where abortions can be performed—or travel to neighboring states, she said.

Planned Parenthood attorneys had asked U.S. Western District Court Judge Brian Wimes to temporarily exempt the Columbia clinic from the requirement before Wednesday. Wimes hasn't yet ruled on that request.

If Wimes does decide to grant a temporary restraining order on the law, abortions could resume in at the clinic.

Planned Parenthood affiliates with Missouri health centers filed the underlying lawsuit to block state requirements on admitting privileges

and mandates that clinics meet hospital-like standards for outpatient surgery. The U.S. Supreme Court in 2016 struck down similar rules in Texas.

U.S District Judge Howard Sachs in May 2017 issued a temporary restraining order to block the admitting privileges rule. But his action was undone in September by judges on the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, who argued Sachs didn't do enough to weigh the cost benefits of Missouri's rules and sent the case back to the lower court.

The underlying challenge to the Missouri abortion regulations is still pending.

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Citation: Missouri down to 1 abortion clinic amid legal battle (2018, October 3) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-10-missouri-abortion-clinic-legal.html>

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