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Photo by Michael Shindler

The new Planned Parenthood clinic, 1670 High St., will have its official grand opening Friday.

Planned Parenthood opens clinic

By Hope Neelson
 Emerald Reporter

The mayors of Eugene and Springfield will be on hand Friday to help cut the ribbon in the grand opening of the new Planned Parenthood of Lane County.

Executive Director Bill Sheppard said the new office is a significant improvement from the former office. The 4,600 square-foot office is twice the size of the former office and is located at 1670 High St.

"We had been leasing the older facility since 1973 and had completely outgrown it," Sheppard said. "We couldn't serve all the clients that needed to receive services because of the size."

Sheppard said the Lane County facility receives about 7,000 patients every year, with the median age being 21.

Since the opening on March 2, Sheppard says the same staff has been able to treat more patients than usual.

"We've been absolutely amazed at the response," Sheppard said. "We have waiting room seating for up to 24, and in the first two weeks of our opening, it has been full at times."

Sheppard said the former office's location on the second floor of a building with no off-street

parking and poor visibility was not meant to be a medical clinic.

Sheppard said after approval from the board of directors, Planned Parenthood funded the property purchase and construction through grants and community donations.

Planned Parenthood has raised approximately half of their \$650,000 capital campaign goal.

"Almost all of the money has come from individuals," Sheppard said. "From sitting down face to face and telling them the Planned Parenthood story."

Sheppard said that story is the organization's commitment to the community in education and services.

"Through the community education program, we will make 600 presentations this month throughout the county from elementary through college years," he said.

Sheppard said Planned Parenthood also is working on overturning the recent Supreme Court decision that forbids agencies that receive federal money from informing patients about abortion.

Finally, Sheppard said Planned Parenthood is working toward getting the Oregon Legislature to designate Oregon as an RU-486 friendly state. That would allow the so-called "abortion pill" to be researched in the state.



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