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Two Abortion Clinics Forced to Close in Texas *Medically Unnecessary Law Will Mean Thousands Go Without Care*

(McAllen, TX) – Today reproductive health care provider Whole Woman's Health announced that they are closing two clinics that provide abortion care to the women of Texas. These health care facilities – in McAllen and Beaumont – were unable to jump over the burdensome and medically unnecessary hurdles placed by Texas legislators in House Bill 2 (HB2).

"It is with great sadness that I am forced to announce that as of March 6th, Whole Woman's Health will be closing our McAllen and Beaumont clinics," said Amy Hagstrom Miller, CEO Whole Woman's Health. "Families from the Rio Grande Valley and Northern Mexico to East Texas and Western Louisiana have been turning to our clinics for safe, compassionate care since abortion was made legal in 1973. We have done everything possible to keep our clinics open but we are simply unable to survive with the new, medically unnecessary guidelines required by HB2."

"The consequence of HB2 is an injustice, plain and simple. It is an injustice to the women we serve and to our communities," Hagstrom Miller continued. "It is an injustice to those in Texas seeking their legal right to end an unwanted pregnancy safely. The legislators lied when they said HB2 would not close our clinics, that they weren't trying to make safe abortion care inaccessible. Now, we see the truth."

HB2 passed the Texas legislature in 2013. It requires all physicians who perform abortions to have hospital admitting privileges within a 30-mile radius, requires a woman to visit 4 separate times (for medical abortion) and bans procedures after 20 weeks gestation. These three provisions went into effect on November 1, 2013. In September the remaining provision will go into effect, requiring that all abortions, even medication abortions, be performed in an ambulatory surgical center (ASC).

"The evidence is clear. This law is not based on science or medical necessity," said Dr. Daniel Grossman, MD, Vice President for Research, Ibis Reproductive Health, and Co-Principal Investigator, Texas Policy Evaluation Project "These restrictions only decrease access to safe abortion without improving patient safety."

Women in rural areas such as the Rio Grande Valley and East Texas (located in Hidalgo and Jefferson counties respectively; two of the poorest counties in the United States) are adversely affected by this law that has already closed 19 clinics and will further decimate the current network of safe and professional abortion care facilities throughout Texas.

The McAllen clinic was the last clinic still serving women of the Rio Grande Valley. Women who live there will now be forced to drive up at least five hours round-trip to receive safe abortion care. In Beaumont, Whole Woman's Health was the only abortion provider between Houston and Louisiana. In this community where nearly 25% of the individuals are living in poverty, women will now need to drive 90 miles one way to Houston to receive care. Some women will not be able to end their pregnancy

because they face too many barriers--they won't have the time off, or the money it takes to travel the long distances. Some will resort to inducing their own abortion without medical assistance.

"The sad truth is that low-income women, women of color and rural women are the ones ultimately bearing the brunt of these harsh laws," said Marva Sadler, Director of Clinical Services at Whole Woman's Health, and former Clinic Manager in Beaumont. "Any woman in Beaumont deserves the respect and dignity of being able to safely and legally end a pregnancy if she needs to. The closure of this clinic now puts that out of reach for too many."

Both Whole Woman's Health of Beaumont and Whole Woman's Health of McAllen were professional, private, patient-centered settings run by licensed physicians, nurses, counselors and patient advocates. These clinics were accredited by the Texas Department of State Health Services, the National Abortion Federation, and members of the Abortion Care Network.

"Politicians may have closed our clinics, but we will always be here for the women and families of Texas," said Hagstrom Miller. "We will fight back, for women and for Texas."

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Amy Hagstrom Miller, CEO of Whole Woman's Health, is available for interviews upon request.

Whole Woman's Health is a woman owned and woman centered organization, committed to providing holistic healthcare for women. We are a group of clinics providing comprehensive gynecology services, including compassionate abortion care. It is our philosophy that each woman must be at the center of her own healthcare decisions, and that treating each woman holistically will better serve women and improve health and happiness in our communities. We have 8 facilities, 6 located in Texas—Austin, Beaumont, Fort Worth, McAllen, two in San Antonio; one in Minneapolis, MN and one in Baltimore, MD. For more information go to: www.wholewomanshealth.com