



Q-C family planning changes today

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Family planning in the Quad-Cities changes in a big way beginning today. Thanks to a windfall private grant, thousands of Quad-City women will be able to receive low-cost or free, long-term, reversible birth control.

The official observance will be a small one. Former Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack will cut the ribbon at the opening of a small clinic in the lower level of the Friendly House in Davenport at 1 p.m. today. The clinic will be operated by Edgerton Women's Health Center, the Quad-Cities' longest-operating family planning center that has been in the baby business for decades. Medical professionals at Edgerton, on Genesis' Davenport East Campus, deliver about 500 babies a year, roughly 20 percent of all Scott County births. They also provide prescription contraception, breast exams, pap smears and most of the routine care healthy women need.

This new initiative will make long-term, reversible birth control available at low- or no-cost to thousands of Quad-City women. These intrauterine devices and under-skin implants provide birth control for four to 10 years. They can be removed when the woman is ready to begin a family.

All of this comes through funding secured by the Iowa Initiative to Reduce Unintended Pregnancies, headed up by Vilsack. The organization, launched in January, received a windfall from the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, a charity named for the late wife of Warren Buffett. Vilsack's initiative will fund programs like this across the state, as well as an \$11.5 million statewide study of family planning education.

The Iowa Initiative is reaching out to existing clinics like Edgerton and many others to reach as many women as possible. At the Friendly House, Edgerton will expand a clinic it has operated to provide nutrition to young moms and their children.

Edgerton has been known to generations of Quad-City women as a reliable, affordable place for health care and family planning. Some may also recall Edgerton was the unfortunate target of an abortion terrorist who tried to destroy the clinic, wrongly believing it was somehow related to abortion.

It is not.

In fact, Edgerton's 36 years of health care for women is one of the Quad-Cities' most effective efforts to curtail abortions. Vilsack's welcome visit scheduled for today extends that tradition with a bold program providing family planning that is certain to reduce the number of women who believe it is necessary to choose abortion.

More importantly, it will increase the percentage of moms who bring healthy, planned and wanted babies into our community.

Join Vilsack

Iowa's former first lady will cut the ribbon 1 p.m. today on Edgerton Women's Health Center's expanded clinic at the Friendly House, 121 N. Myrtle St., Davenport.