



## New Davenport health clinic unveiled; promotes responsible family planning

Deirdre Cox Baker | Posted: Thursday, March 27, 2008 12:00 am

A new clinic in the heart of Davenport aims to promote responsible family planning methods as part of the statewide Iowa Initiative, which is geared toward reducing the number of unintended pregnancies in all 99 counties.

The Edgerton Women's Health Center expanded westward to the Friendly House on Thursday amid blessings from community representatives. It is scheduled to open the first week of April.

"This would not have been possible without the Iowa Initiative," Edgerton president Tom Fedje said of the new clinic, with an estimated cost of \$200,000 annually. The initiative is headed by former Iowa first lady Christie Vilsack and was founded only a few months ago.

Vilsack was in Davenport to officially open the clinic, accompanied by former Sen. Maggie Tinsman, a Republican from Bettendorf who is a member of the Iowa Initiative board of directors.

"This is a special day for the Edgerton Women Health Center," Fedje said. The new clinic is housed in the lower level of the Friendly House, located at 12th and Myrtle streets in a neighborhood slightly west of downtown Davenport.

It is actually the former Kessler Clinic and required few changes for its new purpose. Some painting and wallpapering took just a couple of weeks, and the equipment was donated by Genesis Health Center, clinic officials said.

"The Friendly House has been helping the people of this neighborhood for more than 100 years," Vilsack said, adding that it is a "wonderful model" for the new program.

The Iowa Initiative is privately funded by the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation. The late Thompson Buffett was the wife of Omaha-based investor Warren Buffett.

"We are building Main Street support for this," Vilsack said. Similar clinics, for example, recently opened in Bremer and Buchanan counties in northeastern Iowa. The Waverly, Iowa, clinic is actually located on that town's main thoroughfare.

Iowa spends more than \$47 million for unintended teen pregnancies, Vilsack said. Unintended pregnancies account for 73 percent of births among Iowa women ages 18-19 and 48 percent of all births to those who are 20-25 years old.

The new Edgerton clinic will offer about a dozen kinds of contraceptives, including standard birth-control pills, implants and shields. There will be counseling and physical exams as well as follow-up care. All products will be free or low-cost.

The many services offered by Edgerton include childbirth classes, yearly exams and prenatal care carried out by the medical staff as well as OB/GYN specialists and certified nurse midwives.

One focus will be on long-lasting, reversible contraception, including products such as Implanon that came on the market in the past few years. "These allow women to plan to have their families when they have a job and are economically stable," Vilsack said.

**For more information** on the Edgerton Women's Health Center, see the Web site at [qcwomenshealth.org](http://qcwomenshealth.org). To learn about the Iowa Initiative online, visit [iowainitiative.org](http://iowainitiative.org).

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