

The History of Planned Parenthood in Evansville, Indiana

by Roberta Heiman

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Two comments tell much about the history of family planning in Evansville. One was written by a reporter for *The Courier* in 1914 when, as women across the country were marching in the streets for the right to vote, a group of local women began their suffrage campaign by discreetly opening a tea room for conversation about the issue.

“Down here in the southwestern Indiana pocket, conservativeness is almost a religion,” wrote reporter Laura Hostetter. “Suffrage leaders lead gently, for certain ostracism based on horror follows any near-militant advocacy of progressive principles.”

The other quote came 78 years later, in 1992, when the Planned Parenthood Federation of America gave the Evansville affiliate a national commendation and four-year certification.

“In the face of great difficulties,” the federation said, “this affiliate has been gritty and gutsy, and has shown great courage.”

This, then, is the story of Planned Parenthood in Evansville: A story of gutsy women who (with a few men) have acted discreetly and courageously in a social battle that continues today.

They were hardly a group of radical feminists, the handful of women who established the first family planning agency in Evansville.

The public knew them as Mrs. William Ehrich, Mrs. Ervin Weil, Mrs. Samuel Orr, Mrs. Herbert Dieckman and sisters-in-law Mrs. Samuel Clifford and Mrs. George Clifford, among others; wives of this city's leading business and civic leaders.

Louise Orr was the daughter of a bank president, a graduate of Smith College and mother of a future governor. Carrie Clifford was the daughter of a former Evansville mayor and one of the first graduates of the Carnegie Graduate Library School in Pittsburgh. Bertha Ehrich served on the National Child Labor Commission. She and Ona Dieckman were the wives of prominent local physicians.

They were mainstream.

Some had been leaders in the local suffrage movement two decades earlier, working for that cause until it finally succeeded in 1920.

In October 1934 they gathered anew at the home of Elizabeth Weil for another bold new venture—fully aware of why their guest, an organizer for the National Maternal Health League, advised them to proceed “as quietly as possible” and “approach only persons certain to be interested.”

Mrs. Milford Miller, one of the early volunteers, recalled years later how she was assigned to talk with PTA groups about the new service available for women and, “In fact, I dealt with it so tactfully and delicately that I’m sure no one ever knew what I was talking about!”

The agency was initially named the Maternal Health League of Evansville, becoming a Planned Parenthood affiliate in 1940. For its first 14 years, it shared office space with the Family Welfare Association and moved frequently from one building to another, none in the high-rent district.

The first office on Bond Street was described by volunteer Lois Leich as “a dreadful, derelict old building, where I’m sure there were rats at night.” The agency’s existence “was kept very quiet,” she said, “but it wasn’t really a secret.”

Low-income women were referred to the League by other social agencies, and the league then referred the women to doctors who were willing to help.

...proceed “as quietly as possible”

The doctors, free of charge, examined the women and fitted them for diaphragms — the most reliable birth control device at the time — then sent the women back to the League office with a prescription for the contraceptives. There, the volunteers on duty would provide them with the diaphragm and necessary gel for \$1, payable in installments if needed.

Evansville’s Maternal Health League was for years the only one in the state that operated on a referral basis rather than having its own clinic with a medical staff on hand to do the exams. But the written histories do not agree on all details. A state history says Evansville’s League was the first one established in Indiana when it began operating in November 1933, a year after the clinic in Indianapolis. All locally written histories, however, say the organizational meeting in Evansville was in November 1934. At any rate, it was either the first or second family planning agency in the state.

Before and during the 1940s, many of the volunteers were well-to-do Junior League members. “We took turns,” said Billie (Mrs. Harry) Dees, one of several who survive today. “I would have a day and somebody else would have a day and we’d give the women what they needed. They were low-income women with large families. It was known

that you could have this equipment, the diaphragm, and if you used it you wouldn't have pregnancies. But nobody talked about it."

A 1935 report says five physicians were volunteering their services in the referral system: Drs. Ehrich, Faul, Willis, Wilson and Boyd. But the women who were involved said it was only through the spirit and dedication of Dr. Boyd that the League survived its first 20 years.

Dr. Stella Boyd was one of the first female obstetricians/gynecologists in Evansville. She was a witty, crusty, no-nonsense doctor who people remember as "quite a character" and committed to the cause. Her obituary in The Evansville Press on Feb. 2, 1969, is attached to this history and tells the story.

"She had a particular warm spot in her heart for the poor, and many times delivered babies and treated patients free of charge," the newspaper said. She considered Planned Parenthood her "pet society."

In her office in a fifth floor suite of the Hulman Building, Dr. Boyd often boiled her rubber gloves for sterilizing purposes. "But she would get so busy with other tasks that she would forget about them. They would burn and people would chuckle and say, 'Dr. Boyd's boiling her gloves again.'"

Betty Roberts, a long-time volunteer who later became Planned Parenthood director, said Dr. Boyd "used to say she got in the bathtub every evening with her clothes on and washed body and clothes at the same time, to save time. She was a character. But for many years she was the only reason we could stay open."

Some other physicians who volunteered their services didn't want their participation known publicly. "Their names were kept on a list under

the desk blotter so that no one would know," said volunteer receptionist Millie Clifford. "When someone came in and wanted birth control devices, we just peeked under the blotter and told them which doctor to report to. Then we called the doctor to tell them someone was coming."

But Dr. Boyd's name wasn't secret. "She was very vocal about it," said Mrs. Clifford (daughter-in-law of League founder Carrie Clifford and wife of later board member Sam Clifford Jr., who credits his mother's influence with getting him involved).

Doctors had reason to seek anonymity. In 1951, six of the nine physicians on the League's medical advisory committee "had to resign because St. Mary's Hospital threatened to remove their staff privileges if they continued their involvement with the league," said Jan Walker, who was a volunteer then and later became executive director.

In 1955, Planned Parenthood raised \$5,000 in hopes of moving to bigger quarters and establishing its first medically-staffed clinic, so that women wouldn't have to trudge back and forth from the doctors' offices. But the fund drive prompted a flurry of hostile letters to local newspapers, and no new location could be obtained because landlord after landlord asked exorbitant rent or turned down the agency because "the neighbors objected" or he was "forbidden by his church." Some Planned Parenthood board members were "politely" refused admittance to other community meetings.

Not until 1957 was the agency able to open its first physician-staffed clinic one evening a week and hire its first paid director on a part-time basis for \$125 a month. The clinic was staffed by Dr. Boyd, without approval of the Vanderburgh County Medical Society, records say.

New patient caseload quickly tripled and Planned

Parenthood went broke. Board members — led principally by Ona Dieckman — personally raised funds from friends to keep the doors open.

It was the beginning of the post-war Baby Boom. More and more women came to the clinic, and its money problems grew. Executive director Edith Rosenblum urged the board members to “do your durndest” to raise funds. One who responded was Evansville industrialist Robert Orr — who later became governor of Indiana. He and his wife, Josie, were on the Planned Parenthood board, and he served as chairman of advanced gifts for the fund drive.

“It was a great feather in the cap when Bob and Josie became board members,” Millie Clifford said. “He was such a gentleman, and of course Josie was such a fireball, it didn’t bother her what people thought.”

Testing of the new birth control pill was first discussed at the clinic in 1962 but was initially turned down by the medical advisory committee, records show. But apparently the committee changed its mind a year later.

In 1963, Planned Parenthood of Evansville became a test clinic for the oral contraceptive Enovid, manufactured by Searle Pharmaceuticals.

It was quite the bargain for Searle, which paid the clinic \$60 a month to conduct the study — a total of \$720 a year — plus provided free pills for the 63 participating patients in what was called the “25 Month Club.” The women were interviewed twice yearly, at which time the clinic doctors gave them a pelvic exam. And once a year the women got a Pap test at their own expense, \$3. Within a year, 65 percent of the clinic’s patients were using The Pill.

In 1965, the clinic began a four-year research project on Oracon, the oral contraceptive produced

by Mead Johnson & Co. in Evansville. There were 77 patients participating, increasing to 120 the next year. These patients were interviewed each month by clinic staff and given a pelvic exam and Pap test once a year. Again, it was a bargain for the pharmaceutical company. Mead Johnson supplied the pills and paid \$1 a month per patient, plus \$1 for each patient seen by the clinic doctors.

Suddenly the clinic had almost 800 clients — up from 379 in 1960.

Executive director Evelyn Elmore wrote in 1966, “Of great importance was the policy decision of several township trustees to send relief recipients who request help in family planning to us, and to pay the cost of those patients’ care. This is the first government expenditure for contraceptive care in our community!”

It was all at bargain prices. More than 7,000 patient visits were made to the clinic that year, at a cost that averaged about \$2 per visit. It was possible only because all the nurses, receptionists and doctors were volunteers. The only paid employees were the part-time director and receptionist. Total budget was \$14,000.

For years, Planned Parenthood had sought admission into what is now the United Way. It finally was admitted in late 1976, for funding to begin in 1977. Board president Bettye Roberts called it the “stamp of respectability.” United Way allocations chairman Robert Stockmeyer said Planned Parenthood was “a program plainly needed in this community.”

But the United Way action drew a formal protest by Catholic Bishop Paul Leibold. The local Catholic community had long objected to any funding for Planned Parenthood and continued to object for years.

Ironically, when Jan Walker was executive

director of the agency in the late 1970s and early '80s, the local Catholic hospital, St. Mary's, quietly used the Planned Parenthood clinic to teach family planning to the young doctors going through the hospital's federally-funded residency program. "They had to have training in family planning but St. Mary's would not, could not, teach it. So they trooped those young doctors in and out of the clinic through my office in the back — sort of the back door approach," Mrs. Walker said.

A social worker who had been a long-time

plagued the agency since its beginning were back in full force, and the well-funded local Right-to-Life organization stepped up its verbal attacks against Planned Parenthood, constantly and falsely accusing the agency of performing abortions here. Difficult decisions had to be made.

With 6,000 clients now, the board in 1986 decided that if Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Indiana were to survive, it had to become more self-supporting. It closed its clinic on Weinbach Avenue and opened two new ones — a self-sustaining clinic

"St. Mary's would not, could not, teach it."

volunteer at the agency, Mrs. Walker became executive director of Planned Parenthood during the one time in its history that the Evansville affiliate did not have to struggle financially to stay open — the "fat cat" years, as she called them, when federal Title X and Title XX family planning funds were plentiful, and the United Way was providing for almost half the local Planned Parenthood budget.

In her years as director, Planned Parenthood of Evansville became Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Indiana, with three clinics in Evansville, Posey and Spencer counties. New and expanded services were established.

"There was always good funding then, and good community support," recalled board member Connie Davis. "And then somehow the anti-choice people just kind of got louder and louder..."

In 1972, Planned Parenthood was the only local agency providing problem pregnancy counseling for women seeking contact with legal abortion clinics in other states.

Gradually, federal funds were curtailed. United Way support was cut — eventually, the relationship was severed in 1988. The money problems that had

on Evansville's east side at 971 Kenmore Dr., where no federal funds were to be received, and a Title X-support clinic downtown at 210 S. E. Sixth St. The Gibson County clinic in Princeton also became a self-sustaining clinic. Government funds accounted for only 34 percent of the total budget.

In 1992, the national federation again threatened to place the local affiliate on probation because its fund drive had fallen short of the federation's expectations. There was no criticism of the local clinical services, "which were always above reproach," said board member Martha Julian. "The only issue was financial."

Under that pressure, the board made a momentous decision — to sever its affiliation with the national Planned Parenthood and to merge instead with the Indiana Family Health Council, the private organization responsible for channeling all federal family planning funds to Indiana agencies.

"It was decided that was the only solution," recalled Mrs. Julian, who had only recently become a board member. She said the local affiliate had tried to merge with Indianapolis-based Planned Parenthood of Central Indiana, but the larger

agency had to decline. President Reagan had put the “gag rule” in effect, and agencies had to either refuse to tell women about the option of abortion or give up federal money. “That wasn’t a problem in Evansville because we had both the east side and Downtown offices, and we figured if anyone called Downtown, which got federal money, we could send them to the east side for a pregnancy test and not be subject to the gag rule. But the Indianapolis agency felt its future was too uncertain to consider a merger, because of the gag rule,” she said. “So we couldn’t affiliate with them. But we did get an offer to affiliate with the Family Health Council.”

It led to confusion and turmoil. Almost immediately, the Bloomington-based Planned Parenthood of Southern Indiana declared that women of Evansville would not be left without a Planned Parenthood, and it opened a clinic here. What had been the local affiliate changed its name to Reproductive Health Services. And it continued to operate in the red.

Late in 1994, the Indiana Family Health Council “decided it could no longer afford the losses here, so they put us up for sale,” Julian said.

The buyer was Planned Parenthood of Southern Indiana. It suddenly had three clinics in Evansville but soon merged them into one location.

About a month later, Planned Parenthood of Southern Indiana merged with the Indianapolis affiliate to become Planned Parenthood of Central and Southern Indiana.

In 1997 the Indiana Family Health Council ended federal funding support to Planned Parenthood of Central and Southern Indiana for the next year — more than \$1 million. Planned Parenthood filed a lawsuit charging the council with violating Indiana’s open-door law by making

decisions in closed meetings.

In the meantime, the council cut Vanderburgh County’s share of Title X funds, (the federal funding program for family planning) by almost 31 percent for the next year and gave the money to Tri-Cap, the anti-poverty community action program that had served only Dubois, Warrick and Spencer counties but now was to serve Vanderburgh, too.

Since then both agencies, Planned Parenthood and Tri-Cap, have operated clinics in Evansville. But only Planned Parenthood has continued to be attacked by the Right-to-Life groups. In 1999, the anti-choice Christian Life Center opened its Pregnancy Resource Center in front of the Planned Parenthood clinic saying selection of a site was only “semi-intentional.”

It creates confusion for some clients, said Brandi Litherland, clinic manager for the past year. But remarkably, in spite of all the turmoil and struggles, Planned Parenthood’s health services to women in Evansville have continued uninterrupted and in great demand. The clinic is now serving more than 4,500 clients with “never a boring day,” Ms. Litherland said. Last year, its two nurse practitioners and two clinic assistants handled more than 16,000 client visits.

As this history is written, steps are being taken to establish a new local advisory council to strengthen the agency’s relationship with the community.

Statewide the agency now called Planned Parenthood of Indiana, serves all of the state’s 92 counties. In 2004, its 40 health centers served more than 108,000 patients and educators throughout the state reached more than 22,000 parents, teens and professionals with accurate, age-appropriate information on sexual health. This made for a total client base of more than 130,000 people, ranking Planned Parenthood of Indiana as the third largest Planned Parenthood affiliate in the United States.

Chronology

1934 The Evansville Maternal Health League quietly begins operating a family planning clinic in November. It is one of the first in Indiana to actually begin providing services to women. Staffed entirely by volunteers—among them are some of the most prominent women in Evansville — the clinic shares an office with the Family Welfare League in a building on Second St., It shares an office with the Family Welfare Association on Second St., between Main and Locust.

1935 Moves with Family Welfare Association to second location, in the old Rookery Building at Fourth and Sycamore. Drs. Wilson, Ehrich, Boyd, Faul and Willis are accepting referrals for examination and prescription of contraceptive supplies. Clinic is open on Tuesdays and Fridays. Operating costs are \$1 per patient; membership dues are \$2 a year.

1936 Moves to 715 Bond St., still with Family Welfare; later moved to the Tabernacle Building at Seventh and Main. Cost per patient remains at \$1 for diaphragm and one tube of jelly. Patients can pay either in a lump sum or in installments. The doctors examine our patients in their own offices, free of charge.

1937 New patients are admitted to the clinic on the recommendation of their friends, where in the past a note from their doctor or from the Welfare Department was required.

1938 Maternal Health League files articles of incorporation. As the patients increase, so does the work. There are case records to be made out, follow-up visits to be made to patients who don't return for supplies, supplies to be ordered and many other jobs. More workers are needed, so it's decided that the time has come to increase the membership. Fairly large group is taken in at this time. The dues of the new members make it possible to continue the clinic's work and unnecessary to call on people outside the organization for financial help.

1940 By this time, 23 private physicians are involved. End the requirement that only women with two living children could be served. Agency begins process of becoming a Planned Parenthood affiliate.

1943 Joins the Indiana Maternal Health League. The Evansville clinic is the only one in Indiana using a referral system — sending patients to doctors' offices for exams and fitting of the diaphragms, then the patients return to us for supplies — thus saving the expense of clinic equipment plus a doctor and nurse each time the clinic is held.

1944 Discussion of affiliating with Planned Parenthood is held, but board votes to withhold this decision until after the war is over. During the war, with so many young men gone, the patient load drops to 18 women. Service is limited to those with incomes of less than \$80 a month. Few qualified. One report says that with the drop in the patient load, “colored” patients (who had been served at a separate clinic on Cherry St.) are sent to the white clinic on Bond St.” But there is no other record of a segregated clinic.

1947 Medical advisory board of six doctors is appointed. The clinic moves again with the Family Welfare Association to 313 S. E. Second St.

1948 There are 129 patients. It is decided to move to a larger location and establish a separate office away from the Family Welfare Association. A suitable site is found on the second floor of the Tabernacle Building at Seventh and Main.

1949 For the first time since organizing in 1934, it is felt that the general public should be called upon to help support the clinic. Mrs. Robert (Josie) Orr, wife of Evansville industrialist who became governor of Indiana in the 1970s, was chair of the fund drive, and it raised a total of \$3,009.50. Mrs. R. H. Schoonover is president and Mrs. Harry Dees (she’s known by her nickname Billie) is treasurer. Members conduct “study groups” with local PTA’s. And board members began to attend the national Planned Parenthood meetings, but there were still concerns about affiliating “because of the requirement that 22 percent of the local income would have to be sent to the national headquarters.”

1950 In February, receive certificate of affiliation with Planned Parenthood Federation of America. However, it is decided to keep the name of Maternal Health League of Evansville.

1951 Name is changed to Planned Parenthood of Evansville. First professional employee, a social worker, is hired on part-time basis. She works in the office and visits patients who did not return to the clinic. Also, a clinic secretary is hired at \$100 per month for a 16-hour week. The budget is \$2,103.04 for the year. A Ministerial Advisory Committee is formed, consisting of nine local ministers. Six of the nine doctors on Planned Parenthood’s medical advisory committee have to resign after St. Mary’s Hospital threatens to remove their staff privileges if they continued their affiliation with Planned Parenthood.

1954 First men on board of directors. Board discusses establishing a real clinic rather than referring to physicians. But attempt to establish a clinic in Welborn Hospital is rejected and the search went on.

1955 The fund drive this year raises \$5,000 for the primary objective of getting larger clinic headquarters. But there are repeated frustrations in finding a location. Discrimination was very evident as landlord after landlord asked exorbitant rent or turned down the agency because “the neighbors objected,” or he (the landlord) was “forbidden by his church.” Announcement of the fund drive prompted a flurry of hostile letters to the newspapers, some at least three columns in length. Some Planned Parenthood board members are “politely” refused admittance to other community meetings, and physicians were pressured to refuse donation of their services.

1956 At last, a new larger clinic opens in October in an apartment at 205 Mulberry St., with rent of \$70 a month including stove and refrigerator. Open three afternoons a week, we begin to really develop into a service agency, helping a larger segment of families who need and want us. We still operate the referral

system, sending our patients to doctors' offices for exams and fittings, but plan for a physician-staffed clinic on site.

1956 At this time also came the first public approval of Planned Parenthood by a local church. The United Methodist Church stated that "we believe that Planned Parenthood adopted in Christian conscience may fulfill rather than violate the will of God." Under state rules, information to unmarried women is no longer restricted. But growth and openness brought increasing opposition.

1957 We open our first physician-staffed clinic one evening a week, and hire our first paid director. The clinic is staffed by Dr. Stella Boyd, without approval of the Vanderburgh County Medical Society. Patients no longer have to go to doctors' offices and come back here for supplies. But on three afternoons a week, we still operate the regular referral system. Our first director, Edith Rosenblum, is hired — initially, on a three-month trial basis, then extended for the year — to work part-time for \$125 a month. The board conducts a three-month "blitz" campaign, distributing literature in beauty shops and factories, and holding luncheons with businessmen, groups of church women, public health nurses, staff of other social agencies. The clinic begins to grow and go broke. New patient caseload triples and we serve 167 new families during the year; the first time since the clinic started that the number of first-time patients is over 100. With a budget of \$7,300 for the year, agency almost closes due to financial problems, but board members — led principally by Ona Dieckman, wife of Dr. Herbert Dieckman — personally raise funds from friends to keep door open.

1958 There is frequently less than \$100 cash balance on hand. The agency literally survives month to month, raising money by donation, card parties and any means possible. Financial problems are so great,

we take up a collection in the clinic to pay rent. But patient caseload continues to grow. Staff continues to serve with a very doubtful paycheck and even less job security. Attempt to join United Fund fails. We are told by United Fund officials that although Planned Parenthood met all the requirements, they felt the Catholic population might refuse to contribute to United Fund if Planned Parenthood were admitted. Planned Parenthood withdraws its application "in the interests of community harmony," and is given the only exception to United Fund's "Torchbearer Pledge," in which contributors promise not to contribute to any non-United Fund agency.

1959 Clinic space at 205 Mulberry is doubled by taking over a rear apartment in the building. Total patient visits in first six months were 378, more than double the six-month number two years ago. But money problems continue. Edith Rosenblum resigns as director on Sept. 1, urging board members to "do your durndest!" to raise funds. She expresses both futility and optimism. Board member Robert Orr (future governor of Indiana) is chairman of advanced gifts for our fund drive. Board president R.P. Flynn resigns because he is a representative of a pharmaceutical house (Mead Johnson & Co.) and this is contrary to national policy.

1960 We serve 379 patients. Board minutes are filled with continuing preoccupation on how to find the money to serve the ever-increasing patient load. "If you want to consider savings in cold cash," a board report says, "Dr. Boyd estimates that 200 unwanted births were prevented in 1960. Since 30 percent of our patients are tax supported, her estimate would mean savings of \$60,000 per year, accumulatively." National studies find 89 out of every 100 couples practice some method of birth control. Contraceptives are now legal in every state except Connecticut.

1961 Director Betty Erickson seeks approval from Evansville-Vanderburgh Schools officials to have high school counselors refer low-income married students to Planned Parenthood. Principals say a dean or counselor could refer girls who say they want information. But the school attorney, Joe Hatfield, interpreted that the schools would be out of line in initiating the idea of birth control. Two seniors from a Catholic high school, Mater Dei, visit the Planned Parenthood clinic and tell Mrs. Erickson their churches think what Planned Parenthood does is evil. They said, "God told us to multiply and fill the world with people." Mrs. Erickson tells them, "We've already done that."

1962 We are operating on less than \$5,000 per year. This year we serve 622 families, up from 379 in 1960. Majority of our clients receive service free of charge, based on their incomes. Testing of the new birth control pill is discussed at the clinic, but it was initially turned down by the Medical Advisory Committee.

1963 The Pill is here! Planned Parenthood of Evansville becomes a test clinic for the birth control pill, Enovid, manufactured by Searle Pharmaceuticals. Searle is paying us \$60 per month to conduct the study, which is a total of \$720 for the year, plus provides free pills for the 63 participating patients. We should have a total patient visit of 209 in the study, called "the 25 Month Club." The patients are interviewed twice yearly, at which time our doctors give them a pelvic exam, and once a year they get a Pap test at their own expense (\$3). Dr. Harold Davidson is head of the medical advisory board and the Rev. Phil Hoy is chair of the ministerial advisory board. Money problems continue. An October fund drive led by board member Jan Walker raises over \$2,000 to keep us open. Dr. Isabel Turner, women's specialist at Evansville State Hospital, has volunteered to

start helping Dr. Boyd at our clinics. Mrs. Dorothy Stephens, obstetrics instructor at Evansville College School of Nursing, volunteers as clinic receptionist. We have only one paid staff at \$180 a month, inadequate insurance, no equipment replacement. A report by Mrs. Rosenblum says the Planned Parenthood Federation of America places our Evansville affiliate on probation.

Supplies dispensed to our 626 families included: Creams 1,312; diaphragms 174, gels 123, dosimeters 39, Koromex A 93, foam tablets 80, inserters 16, Enovid 2,621; Ortho foam 5, Contra Sq 9, Ortho-Novum 7, Delfin 3, condoms 60-12s and 70-3s.

1964 Sixty-five percent of our patients are using the pill. Clinic begins providing Pap tests in cooperation with American Cancer Society. Ten of our new patients requested vasectomy, and the Human Betterment Association paid for eight.

1965 We begin a four-year research project on Oracon, the oral contraceptive produced by Mead Johnson & Co. in Evansville. There are 77 patients participating (increases to 120 next year). These patients are interviewed each month by our staff and are given a pelvic exam and a Pap test once a year. We receive \$1 a month grant-in-aid per patient, plus \$1 for each patient seen by our doctors, in addition to free Oracon supplies for the patients. Dr. Roger Newton, who works at Mead Johnson, becomes the clinic's medical director. We also open an outpatient clinic in Deaconess Hospital. Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, speaks in Evansville in April. With a total of 785 patients, Planned Parenthood decides again to seek admission to United Fund.

1966 We are accepted into the United Fund in May — over formal protest by Catholic Bishop Paul Leibold — for funding to begin in January of next year. Our director, Betty Roberts, calls United Fund

acceptance the “stamp of respectability.” United Fund allocations chairman Robert Stockmeyer says we are “a program plainly needed in this community.” This is a year of much progress. We move in March to larger quarters in a better location, at 221 S. E. Eighth St. Immediately there’s an increase in caseload. Of great importance was the policy decision of several township trustees to send relief recipients who request help in family planning to us, and to pay the cost of those patients’ care. *This is the first government expenditure for contraceptive care in our community.* More than 7,000 patient visits are made, at a cost of about \$2 per visit. Seven local obstetricians give their services at clinic sessions with 818 medical exams made. All got a Pap test. We have only two paid employees; the nurses and receptionists are all volunteers. The help of all these people keep our total expenses to \$14,000. Records show 45 percent of our 825 patients have three or more children, and 56 percent have total family income less than \$75 a week. We continue to be the most rapidly growing agency in the health and welfare field.

1967 Almost 1,000 women (953) come to our clinic this year. And 85 percent are using the pill. United Fund provides almost half of our operating budget.

1968 We serve 1,050 women in more than 10,000 clinic visits with only two employed staff members, plus more than 50 volunteers. Total expenditures are \$26,808, of which United Fund contributed half.

1969 In a decade we’ve grow from 422 patients in 1959 to now 1,198 patients. Staff includes executive director, clinic coordinator, bookkeeper, recruit nurse via a state outreach project, a work-study student from University of Evansville, two Neighborhood Youth Corps workers for 10 weeks to canvass neighborhoods with printed material, and a housekeeper for seven hours a week. United Fund

provides us \$13,397, not quite half our budget. The outreach nurse, Kathy Burris, drives a red Planned Parenthood van to neighborhoods to reach people.

1970 Congress passes the Family Planning Act, Title X, making federal funds available. For the first time, Planned Parenthood has sufficient funds to hire an adequate professional staff and expand services. The growth is phenomenal; numbers of patients soon doubled, then tripled.

1971 Clinic moves into new quarters at 1610 S. Weinbach Ave.

1972 We are the only local agency providing problem pregnancy counseling for women seeking contact with legal abortion clinics in other states. Our budget is \$90,000, including \$12,000 from United Way and \$65,000 in state/federal funds.

1973 Our operating budget has increased from \$35,000 in 1970 to more than \$200,000 this year. Part of the increase is to extend services to Gibson County by opening a clinic in Princeton, and hire two full-time social workers to visit door-to-door through target poverty areas. We serve a record 3,500 clients, both men and women.

1974 Our first family planning nurse practitioner, Linda Evinger, is hired. Three of our volunteer doctors, including medical director Roger Newton and Dr. Gregg Sheehan — both adjunct professors at University of Evansville School of Nursing — helped develop and supervise the training program for her.

1975 William Boothe is hired as the first man to become our executive director, replacing Edith Rosenblum who is now in her 70s. She was our first paid executive director in 1957, then remained as a volunteer until returning to the job five years ago. The local Right-to-Life organization puts up a fetus billboard across the street from our clinic.

1976 United Way support is reduced to \$9,000, down from more than \$12,000 the past several years. And federal Title X funds are cut by 30 percent. After a good deal of debate, the board votes to serve teens without parental consent. Two board members resign — a lawyer and a judge who felt that as officers of the country, they could not be party to what was then a gray legal area in Indiana. But the majority of board members feel we would not be fulfilling our mission had we not served the teens; the need was clear.

1977 Early 1977 finds Evansville's Planned Parenthood in trouble. The loss of its second director within a two-year period and a couple of periods without a director had result in a disastrous site visit for re-certification by the national federation and a questionable rating, Jan Walker reported. We were given 36 mandates for improvements if we were to continue to be a Planned Parenthood. With a new director and a determined board, we made it. By the end of the year we had our house in order and were back in the good graces of the Federation. When Title XX became available for the first time, the clinic applies for a cautious \$1,000 and receives it.

1978 We boldly asked for \$50,000 in Title XX funds and to our amazement were given \$120,000. The "fat cat" years began for Planned Parenthood. We open a clinic in Posey County, in a wing of the new Welborn Clinic building in Mt. Vernon. At the end of the year we try to give back \$40,000 and almost caused chaos because "no one returns government money." The next two years are a period of great growth and program expansion.

1979 Planned Parenthood of Evansville, now with clinics in Vanderburgh, Posey and Spencer counties, officially becomes Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Indiana. Earlier in the year we moved the small part-time Planned Parenthood

service in Gibson County from an obscure basement room in Gibson General Hospital to our own attractive bungalow just off the square in downtown Princeton. It flourishes and eventually serves 1,100 patients. In Evansville, our services are expanded with establishment of a volunteer training program, a Teen Hotline and teen Peer Resource Program and an outreach program in public housing projects.

1980 The Planned Parenthood Dancers make their debut in June in a performance at the senior citizens center at Governor and Canal Sts. Two men, two women, in a "soft-shoe" approach to telling our story.

1981 The Planned Parenthood Federation of America makes a recertification visit, and we're terrific. A dedicated, experienced staff and an active board has everything under control. We are given a four-year recertification and received the federation's National Fairchild Award for "exemplary compliance with the standards of affiliation."

1984 United Way cuts off its support, saying Planned Parenthood has had a cash balance for the past three years and doesn't need United Way funds. But Director Jan Walker files an appeal, saying United Way misinterpreted our budget. It takes almost a year of negotiations before United Way agrees in December to restore funding "unless the Planned Parenthood status changes" in April next year. Coupled with continuing cuts in federal funds, it left us struggling with the worst financial problems in more than a decade. Faye Wattleton, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, speaks in Evansville at our 50th anniversary banquet. About 400 attend, while about 100 representatives of area Right-to-Life groups picket the event at Sheraton Inn on U.S. 41.

1985 Dr. Roger Newton is asked to resign, after being Planned Parenthood's local medical director for 18 years, because he supported a bill in the

Indiana House that would require the cremation or burial of fetal remains from abortions or miscarriages. Planned Parenthood director Kay Koch said Dr. Newton violated an agency policy. Newton, who always has been anti-abortion, said, "Unless you are willing to be absolutely pro-abortion, then evidently you're not welcome." Five fulltime staff positions are cut, "dictated by financial concerns." The board decides to refer clients who ask for problem pregnancy counseling to outside sources — a list of ministers.

1986 With a \$60,000 federal funding cut, board decides PPSWI must become more self-sustaining. We close the Weinbach Avenue clinic and open two new ones — a self-sustaining clinic at 971 Kenmore Drive on Evansville's east side while offering free and sliding-fee services only at a Title X-funded clinic downtown at 210 S. E. Sixth St. The Gibson County clinic in Princeton also becomes self-sustaining. We have 6,000 clients.

1988 Planned Parenthood terminates its affiliation with United Way.

1989 PPSWI's patient load totals 6,300. Government funds account for only 34 percent of the budget.

1992 A time of turmoil. Planned Parenthood presence in Evansville is severed, but only briefly, when the local board after a failed fund drive decides to drop its affiliation with national Planned Parenthood on April 1 and becomes affiliated instead with the Indiana Family Health Council, which is the conduit for federal family planning funds in this state. The local agency, under constant attack by the well-funded Right-to-Life of Vanderburgh County, changes its name to Reproductive Health Services. But Bloomington-based Planned Parenthood of Southern Indiana (PRSI) acts quickly to open a new clinic here in August at 2207 E. Morgan Ave., without federal funds. Three anti-abortion picketers

stage a brief demonstration at the new clinic and leave when told police have been called.

1992 In the meantime, the Indiana Medical Licensing Board launches an investigation into a complaint by an unidentified Evansville woman who claims that her teenaged daughter was given birth control pills by a nurse at the Planned Parenthood clinic here without being seen by a doctor. The board summoned medical directors of Planned Parenthood clinics across to state to appear at its April meeting to discuss whether nurses in the clinics are practicing beyond the scope of their licenses.

1993 In a national ranking of 195 cities with over 100,000 population, only five have a worse score than Evansville for maternal and child health, which measures such factors as infant and child mortality rates, percentage of births to teenagers, and low birthweight babies. "We have our heads in the sand on this issue. Our teen pregnancy rate is incredibly high and we're doing nothing about it," wrote one local physician in a survey by *The Evansville Courier*.

1994 Planned Parenthood of Southern Indiana buys back the two Evansville clinics that severed their relationship with Planned Parenthood two years ago. The clinics are put up for sale by the Indiana Family Health Council, which says it can no longer afford to operate them. So Planned Parenthood now has three clinics here. One consequence of all the changes is that, after a 60-year struggle, there is no longer a family planning board based in Evansville.

1995 PPSI merges with the affiliate in Central Indiana to become Planned Parenthood of Central and Southern Indiana (PPCSI). With headquarters in Indianapolis, the new agency operates 20 family planning clinics serving 46 Hoosier counties. Three separate clinics in Evansville are consolidated into a single new location at 125 N. Weinbach. In neighboring Henderson, Ky., the president of Stop

Planned Parenthood International, Ted Sedlak of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., comes to speak at a protest against plans for a clinic there. And local Right-to-Life's Teens for Life stage a protest at the Evansville clinic, saying they were there to protest the abortions being done inside. The Evansville clinic this year receives \$126,194 in Title X funds to serve 3,500 low-income women.

1997 The Indiana Family Health Council, which decides how federal Title X family planning funds are spent in Indiana, cuts off all funds to Planned Parenthood of Central and Southern Indiana for next year. Planned Parenthood files a lawsuit charging the council with violating Indiana's open-door law by making decisions in closed meetings. The council has cut Vanderburgh County's share of Title X funds by almost 31 percent for next year and gives the funds to Tri-Cap, the anti-poverty community action program that serves Dubois, Warrick and Spencer counties. Tri-Cap announces plans to open a clinic in Evansville early next year. Planned Parenthood appeals for community donations to help support its Evansville clinic, which is serving almost 4,800 clients. In the meantime, the new Planned Parenthood clinic in Henderson, which drew strong opposition when it was first proposed two years ago, has opened quietly with no protest. It is a joint project of Planned Parenthood of Central and Southern Indiana with the Planned Parenthood of Louisville, Ky.

1998 After months of delay, Tri-Cap Family Health Services opens an Evansville family planning clinic June 1 at 450 E. Sycamore St. with Title X funds. It was supposed to begin services here in February but ran into problems finding affordable office space. The Indiana Family Health Council has cut Title X funds to Vanderburgh County by almost 31 percent, from \$184,022 last year to \$127,437 this year.

1998 Evansville resident Yvonne White, 43, said she went to Planned Parenthood for her annual Pap test and physical exam, and "it saved my life." Planned Parenthood nurse practitioner Caroline Swaim detected a small lump in Mrs. White's neck and it turned out to be a rapidly growing cancer on her thyroid gland. It was successfully removed by surgery.

1999 The anti-choice Christian Life Center opens a Pregnancy Resource Center in front of Evansville's Planned Parenthood clinic at 125 N. Weinbach, saying selection of the site was "semi-intentional." Also, Evansville women seeking the new emergency oral contraceptive kit, Preven — the so-called "morning-after pill" — find limited availability here. Most local hospital emergency rooms are not providing it for rape victims, and a survey of pharmacies in the city found most are not stocking the product. It is available at Planned Parenthood.

2000 PPSI merges with affiliates in northwestern and northeastern counties to form Planned Parenthood of Greater Indiana.

2001 Planned Parenthood clinic here is evacuated one day in October after getting a threatening letter that was sent to 110 clinics nationwide.

2004 Planned Parenthood of Greater Indiana merges with Planned Parenthood of North Central Indiana to become Planned Parenthood of Indiana, Inc.

Directors of Planned Parenthood in Evansville, 1958-1992

1957	Edith Rosenblum
1959-1962	Betty Erickson
1962	Jane Roney
1963-1966*	Evelyn Elmore *(Jan Walker's history says Mrs. A. J. Grady filled the post in 1964, but other records are different.)
1966-1967	Fran Klinger
1967-1969	Bettye Roberts
1969	Desolee Yeiser
1970-1975	Edith Rosenblum
1975-1977	William Boothe
1977-1984	Janet Walker
1984-1992	Kay Koch

Evansville Planned Parenthood Locations, 1934-2005

1934	Second St., between Main and Locust
1935	Fourth and Sycamore Sts.
1936	715 Bond St.
1947	313 S. E. Second St.
1948	Seventh and Main Sts., the Tabernacle Building
1956	205 Mulberry St., the first clinic
1966 or 1967	221 S. E. Eighth St.
1971	1610 S. Weinbach Ave.
1986	210 S. E. Sixth St. and 917 Kenmore Dr.
1992	2207 E. Morgan Ave.
1994	125 N. Weinbach Ave.

Satellite Locations

1965	Outpatient clinic at Deaconess Hospital on Tuesday mornings
1978	Clinic in Mt. Vernon for Posey County
1978	Clinic in Princeton for Spencer County
1982	Pregnancy test clinic at Lincoln Gardens/Erie Homes
1997	Clinic in Henderson, Ky., in joint venture with PP of Louisville

Agency Names Over the Years

1934	Maternal Health League of Evansville
1951	Changed name to Planned Parenthood of Evansville
1979	Becomes Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Indiana, with clinics in Evansville, Mount Vernon and Princeton
1992	PPSI severs its affiliation with the national federation and becomes Reproductive Health Services, then Bloomington-based Planned Parenthood of Southern Indiana establishes a clinic in Evansville. Since then there has been no locally-based board of directors for family planning services.
1994	PPSI buys back the Reproductive Health Services clinics. Evansville once again is served by just one family planning agency
1995	PPSI merges with the affiliate in Central Indiana to become Planned Parenthood of Central and Southern Indiana
2000	PPCSI merges with the affiliates