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Planned Parenthood expects to keep local Komen grant

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The decision by the nation's leading breast-cancer charity, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, to halt grants to Planned Parenthood likely will force Planned Parenthood of Central Texas to seek new funding for mammograms for low-income women.

But there is no indication the area Komen chapter will take back a \$50,000 grant recently awarded to the local Planned Parenthood. Such action is being urged by Pro-Life Waco, which opposes abortion and campaigns against Planned Parenthood.

"Komen Central Texas should

■ Pfizer recalls birth control pills/2A

follow the spirit and intent of its parent organization in Dallas and immediately end its funding of Waco's abortion provider," John Pisciotta, director of the anti-abortion group, said in a statement.

The national Komen office confirmed earlier this week that it has halted grants to Planned Parenthood. At least 19 affiliates of the family planning organization received grants last year totaling \$680,000.

Komen spokeswoman Leslie Aun

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said the money cutoff is the result of the charity's newly adopted criteria barring grants to organizations under investigation by local, state or federal authorities.

According to Komen, this applies to Planned Parenthood because it is the focus of an inquiry launched by Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., to determine whether public money was spent improperly on abortions.

Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, has said Stearns' inquiry is politically motivated.

Komen's Central Texas affiliate, based in Waco, referred questions about the situation to its headquarters. Officials there did not return phone calls.

Felicia Goodman, director of community affairs for the

local Planned Parenthood, said she has not been contacted by the Komen chapter about this year's grant. Worth nearly \$50,000, it took effect Jan. 1, she said.

Since the two organizations have a contract related to the grant money, Goodman said it is unlikely it could be rescinded. Plus, some of the money already has been spent, she said.

Funding vouchers

Planned Parenthood does not perform mammograms or related follow-up work at its clinics, Goodman said.

Instead, it provides vouchers that low-income clients can use at local mammography providers.

The Komen money helps fund those vouchers. Plus, it serves as the matching funds Planned Parenthood needs to participate in the state's breast and cervical cancer screening program, Goodman said.

The program kicks in after low-income women are diagnosed with cancer, allowing

those who would not otherwise qualify for Medicaid to enroll. The government program covers cancer treatment, reconstructive surgery and medication therapy.

Planned Parenthood is the only program participant in a 10-county area, Goodman said.

Together, the two programs paid for 609 women to receive mammograms in 2010, she said. They also paid for follow-up services given to 292 women whose mammograms found potential problems, she said.

"Because of the Komen funds, we are able to serve more women in a way that's more comprehensive," Goodman said.

Assuming Komen grants don't start flowing to Planned Parenthood again, the local affiliate simply will have to

do more fundraising to replace the money, Goodman said. Although \$50,000 is a significant amount, she said she is confident local supporters will replace it once they learn lifesaving services are on the line.

"We are not going to end any services," Goodman said. "We're going to find that money."

Goodman said Planned Parenthood officials don't have any animosity toward the local Komen chapter because of the new funding policy. The chapter's hands are tied, she said.

But Pro-Life Waco's request for the grant to be rescinded is unreasonable, Goodman said.

"It makes me sad that a program that clearly helps women get access to mammo-

grams would become a political topic," she said.

Family Health Center in Waco and the local chapter of the American Cancer Society have received Komen grants in the past.

Officials from the two organizations said they would be happy to accept any grant money shifted away from Planned Parenthood.

Pisciotta, from the anti-abortion group, said such redirection is something abortion opponents have been pushing for years.

Only a small percentage of Komen affiliates give money

to Planned Parenthood. Most award money to hospitals and other health care groups instead, he said.

"If most Komen affiliates can get done what they want done without Planned Parenthood, our affiliate can, too," Pisciotta said.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.