

**SATURDAY**

March 26, 2011

Town Square

# Family planning saves costs

Planned Parenthood is important health care option for many

I am dismayed by the efforts being made by many of our legislators to defund Planned Parenthood. It seems obvious that many of our lawmakers and many of my neighbors have no idea of the significant role that Planned Parenthood plays in providing reproductive health care to women, and men, in Central Texas. These people otherwise would be unable to afford this care.

With the recent closing of two Planned Parenthood offices in Marlin and Groesbeck — because of staff shortages — there will be even fewer family planning services offered in the area.

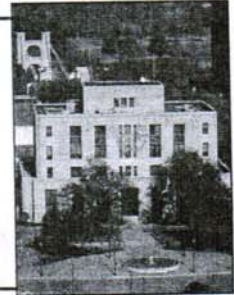
On March 10, supporters for Planned Parenthood of Central Texas visited our elected legislators in Austin to discuss issues related to the importance of family planning. We told them that Planned Parenthood has been serving Waco and McLennan County since 1939. That's 72 years! And its services must continue.

It was started by a group of courageous and articulate women who recognized the needs of many of their sisters for safe and affordable family planning care.

Family planning has always been the main focus of Planned Parenthood facilities. Research has shown unequivocally that when women are able to plan the number of children they have, they are more likely to complete education degrees, deliver healthy, full-term babies, and more likely to care financially for those children and not become reliant on welfare or public assistance.

How is it possible to be against helping

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**FAITH  
KOPPLIN**

Guest  
columnist

women and men to control their fertility? Planning for one's family and their needs is responsible behavior.

Planned Parenthood is not an agency to defund. It is an agency to support.

How would your life been different if you had parented an unlimited number of children and had to work two or three jobs to support those children with little help for improving your life or that of your children? If your children faced grinding poverty, poor health and education, wouldn't you be grateful for a clinic like Planned Parenthood to provide the most basic health care services?

And Planned Parenthood also funds screenings for: breast and cervical cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, hypertension, anemia and diabetes. Under federal and state laws, family planning funds may not be used to pay for *any* abortion services.

Texas ranks No. 1 among states in highest percentage of repeat teen births. It ranks in the top three states with the highest teen birth rates, according to a 1990 to a 2006 analysis by the Centers for Disease Control. The Texas Department of State Health Services reports that every 10 minutes a teen in Texas gets pregnant.

Let us all be responsible citizens and continue supporting with our tax dollars family planning services and Planned Parenthood.

**Faith Kopplin is a retired nurse educator who lives in Woodway.**