



The property was already zoned for medical uses, and we answered questions put to our representatives honestly and truthfully. We always planned to build a medical facility.

Did we hope to protect the privacy and safety of vendors working on our project and our future clients? Did we hope to avoid disruptive and potentially violent protests that might delay the opening of a facility greatly needed in DuPage and Kane Counties? You bet we did. It should be obvious by now why we chose that course.

As any responsible full-service women's health care facility would do, we took all appropriate precautions to prevent those who oppose women's access to contraception and abortion from learning about plans to build this facility. The activists of the Pro-Life Action League who have been opposing our new facility are headquartered in Aurora and have a well-documented history of advocating violence against both persons and property as well as other related criminal activity.

We think you will understand the urgency of our concerns when you consider the following facts about the Pro-Life Action League and its leader, Joe Scheidler.

Scheidler (along with a handful of other anti-abortion leaders) formed PLAN – the Pro Life Action Network. Scheidler called PLAN the “pro-life mafia” and proclaimed “a year of pain and fear” for anyone seeking or providing abortion.

After a six-week trial in 1998, a jury in Chicago unanimously found that the Pro-Life Action League Network orchestrated 121 crimes involving acts of threats of force or violence against women's health facilities that offered abortion. These crimes proven at trial included beating a post-operative ovarian surgery patient over the head with a sign, knocking her unconscious and causing her to bleed from the sutures in her abdomen; seizing a clinic administrator by the throat, choking and bruising her; and slamming a clinic staff member and volunteer against the stairs (sending them to a hospital and causing permanent injuries) and destroying medications and equipment. Joe Scheidler personally praised the individuals who carried out some of these misdeeds, even taking credit for them.

Scheidler once said “I just wish I had a medal or some sort of battle scar for each time I was arrested” for his forceful opposition to abortion and throughout the period of militant anti-abortion protesting, when clinic bombings and murders of doctors spotted the headlines, Scheidler was unapologetic about his group’s tactics. “I’m doing what I have to do. So what? I’ve got some misdemeanors ... I don’t consider myself a criminal,” he said.

Immediately upon learning of the Aurora facility, these radical anti-abortion activists began photographing the license plates of our construction workers and vowed to harass those who were working to build the facility. They also announced their intention of seeking a permit to picket the homes of our employees who will operate the facility.

Does it truly come as a surprise, then, that as we complied with all legal and public disclosure requirements, we simultaneously sought to keep this private while the construction was proceeding because the zealots who have been opposing our new facility have a well-documented history of violence and criminal activity?

Planned Parenthood has been providing reproductive health care throughout the Chicago Area for the past 60 years. We have a reputation for providing high-quality, accessible and affordable care for all who need it, and we look forward to serving the people of Aurora.

We have provided this support despite the often violent and illegal actions of those who oppose a woman's exercise of constitutionally protected rights to reproductive freedom.

If you have any questions regarding this issue or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 312-592-6800.

Sincerely,

Steve Trombley, President and CEO  
Planned Parenthood/Chicago Area

Cc: Mayor Tom Weisner  
City Council