WASHINGTON — New state restrictions on clinics that provide abortions could leave millions of women — most of them poor and uninsured — without easy access to cancer screenings and other basic health care services.

In recent years, abortion opponents have tried to limit abortions by barring them after a certain number of weeks and by requiring women who want to end their pregnancies to have ultrasounds.

These restrictions target abortion directly.

New abortion opponents in some states are pushing for new standards for clinics, such as requiring doctors to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital, that may be difficult or impossible for them to meet.

Abortion rights supporters fear the new rules could force many clinics to close — a result that would make it more difficult for women to get a broad array of health care services, not just abortions.

“Every time a clinic closes, the women who would be using these clinics are just one step closer to the abortion ‘goal line’ being reached.”

McGuire said.

Fifteen states now require clinic doctors to have hospital admitting privileges, according to the Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights. In addition, 26 states restrict abortion providing clinics to meet general facility standards, which stipulate everything from the size of certain rooms, the types of latex gloves used and the width of hallways.

Supporters say such requirements are in the public's best health interests. They cite high-profile examples of poor oversight and broad malpractice cases, most notably the 2006 lawsuit that led to the closing of Planned Parenthood's clinic in Philadelphia.

“Government is wrong about having high health standards in place,” said Julie Rikelman, a spokeswoman who claims clinics have regulations and requirements for doctors that has been blocked by a federal judge. “If they would just do what we tell the best examples of the patients is run a problem.”

Opponents say such laws they might close a vital health care entry-way for women. In many states, the clinics offer services ranging from sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment to mammograms, PAP tests and cancer screenings. They also offer information about birth control and birth control services — in many cases at reduced fees for the uninsured.

In 2011 and 2012, the Guttmacher Institute conducted a survey of women receiving services at family planning centers located in communities in which there were other health care options. About four in 10 women said they used a clinic as their exclusive health care provider in the past year.

Among other reasons, the women said they preferred going to a clinic because the center knew more about women's family planning needs, most had been referred from other centers.

“Opponents see the new laws as increasing the anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony List. “There
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Laws requiring ultrasounds, requiring women to counsel or have a lawyer before an abortion, and measures that push against court rulings that have for a generation protected the right to abortion.

“If it's some third-brain attack,” said Haline Kinsow, a professor of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

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The connection between the clinics, public health care programs and women's health was further underscored by a Kaiser Family Foundation study. The report noted that in many states, there are few providers willing to accept Medicaid or other subsidized insurance programs. In those places, the clinics are a vital, and sometimes the only, option for low-income people.

For instance, in 2011 Texas blocked Planned Parenthood-affiliated health center from receiving funds from the state's Medicaid Women's Health Program. Prior to the funding cut-off, those centers were caring for nearly 50,000 patients. The program served 10 percent fewer women the year after the cuts, state data showed.

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has also noted that clinic closings could damage women's health.

Push to outlaw abortion one state at a time

The Kansas City Star

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — State legislators passed fewer but more powerful laws restricting abortion this year, aiming to break traditions and more to ouroar the process.

Nationally, lawmakers have passed 120 abortion restrictions as the record-setting year of 2012 after Republicans gained control of many states committees. Still, abortion-rights supporters see the laws this year as increasingly restrictive.

North Dakota banned abortion at six weeks. Arkansas banned most abortions at 12 weeks. West Virginia and Alabama banned doctors from performing abortions if they don't have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. And Texas adopted a law requiring abortions be performed only in hospital-type settings.

“Legislatures have been very busy trying to restrict abortion in every way they can,” said Julie Rikelman, litigation director for the Center for Reproductive Rights.

“This difference this year is how states are striking at the heart of abortion access. In earlier years, abortion supporters, the new rules generally just made it harder to get the process.

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