ties reported short average periods between first contact and the abortion procedure. Thirty-three percent estimated the interval at 1–3 days, 17% at four days, 17% at 5–6 days, 18% at seven days, and 14% at more than seven days (not shown). Abortion clinics reported much less time between first contact and the procedure than did other facilities. Periods of one week or more were indicated by only 17% of abortion clinics, compared with 43% of nonspecialized clinics and 35% of physicians' offices. Similarly, periods of one week or more were reported by 25% of clinics with 1992 abortion caseloads of 400 or more, compared with 38% of smaller facilities. The period between first contact and the pregnancy termination is longer now than in 1981, when a survey of providers reported that only 11% typically needed seven or more days. Periods of one or more days were indicated by only 17% of abortion clinics, compared with 43% of physicians' offices, and 35% of physician's offices.

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A certain amount of delay is inevitable if facilities perform abortions only a few days a week, as is the case with many smaller providers. For example, a woman seeking services from a provider that performs abortions only one day a week might have to wait up to six days for an appointment if the facility has appointment slots available on the next scheduled service day, and longer if the appointments are all taken. Of all nonhospital providers in our survey, 11% performed abortions on only one day per week and 15% on two days. Only 38% performed abortions five or more days each week. Physicians with small abortion practices were most likely to perform abortions any day of the week (51%), while nonspecialized clinics were most likely to offer the procedure on only one or two days (41%). Thus, the facilities most likely to perform abortions on only one or two days a week appear to be those that are large enough to have specialized abortion sessions but small enough to need only one or two such sessions a week.

Once an appointment has been made, a woman is usually able to have her pregnancy terminated in one trip to the facility unless state law requires two visits. As Table 2 shows, 60% of nonspecialized clinics and 35% of physicians' offices. Similarly, periods of one week or more were reported by 25% of clinics with 1992 abortion caseloads of 400 or more, compared with 38% of smaller facilities. The period between first contact and the pregnancy termination is longer now than in 1981, when a survey of providers reported that only 11% typically needed seven or more days, compared with 25% in 1993.

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