

Under New Management, Same Deadly Service Planned Parenthood's Latest Annual Report and Activities

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The Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) has a new president and is busy working on a new image. But what is found in its 2004-05 "Strength in Diversity, United in Purpose" annual report is simply more of the same from the nation's largest abortion chain—a new record number of abortions and a commitment to more abortion advocacy.

In many ways what is excluded is at least as interesting as what is included. The report avoids mentioning that its endorsed candidate lost the presidential election, that pro-lifers are promoting legislation across the nation, and that PPFA now faces lawsuits brought by the families of patients who died after receiving RU486 at its clinics.

A Record Number of Abortions

The report highlights PPFA's activities and offers budget figures from July 2004 through June 2005, though its latest service numbers cover only those delivered in 2004.¹ During that time, PPFA replaced long-time president Gloria Feldt with interim president Karen Pearl, who was succeeded in mid-February 2006 by experienced political operative Cecile Richards.

The report states once again that Planned Parenthood believes "every child should be wanted and loved," but its service report shows Planned Parenthood clinics performed 255,015 abortions in 2004, an increase of 4% over the previous year's record total.

By contrast, Planned Parenthood saw only 17,610 prenatal patients and just 386 infertility patients at its "more than 860 health centers" in the United States, proving yet again that Planned Parenthood's plans typically don't involve parenthood. Abortions outnumbered adoption referrals (1,414) at Planned Parenthood clinics by a more than 180 to 1 margin in 2004.

Explicit Advocacy at Home and Abroad

While the lethal substance remains the same, there is a subtle change in emphasis. The 2003-04 report referred to Planned Parenthood as "the world's largest and most trusted voluntary reproductive health care organization." The 2004-05 report replaces that language by describing the group as "the nation's leading sexual and reproductive health care advocate and provider" (emphasis added).

"Reproductive health" and "reproductive health care," as we all know, are often euphemisms for abortion. What "reproductive health care" advocacy and provision entails is made all too clear in the pages that follow. Under the heading "Advocating Internationally," Planned Parenthood talks about its activities in Kenya, where PPFA-International worked with colleagues and activists to establish a "Reproductive Health Steering Committee ... to champion a coordinated and sophisticated effort around reproductive health and rights, particularly abortion rights."

It should be noted that, in what appears to be an addition to the more than quarter million abortions in the U.S., Planned Parenthood provided "abortion services" to 18,000 women in other countries.

Ignoring Embarrassing Details

What is not in the report is almost as fascinating as what is. Stunning by its absence is any mention of the women who have died after receiving RU486 at Planned Parenthood clinics. The annual report mentions Planned Parenthood's clinical trial "De-Medicalizing Mifepristone Medical Abortion in the U.S.," which sought to justify the contention that ultrasound wasn't needed to rule out tubal pregnancy.²

However, never mentioned is that at least four of the six RU486 patients who have died in the U.S. (at least one during the period covered by the report) were Planned Parenthood patients. With the announcement of additional deaths at its clinics and families of two of those women naming local Planned Parenthood in lawsuits, the organization announced this past March that it would no longer be administering a second drug that it had used in the process in a way that deviated from the government-approved protocol. (See NRL News, April 2006.)

Majoring in Minorities

The "Strength in Diversity" theme and the feature of Latino faces and the Hispanic chair of the Planned Parenthood board may strike some as simply a bow to political correctness until one remembers that Hispanics are an increasing part of the U.S. population and an increasing part of the abortion industry's targeted clientele.

Years ago, Planned Parenthood explicitly identified its core clients as "young women, low income women, and women of color" (Plan of Action, 1997). By 2000, minorities, though comprising just over 25% of America's population, were responsible for more than half of all the nation's abortions.

Record Revenues

Financial data released in PPFA's latest annual report make Planned Parenthood's claim to be a nonprofit harder and harder to fathom. Revenues at Planned Parenthood for the 2004-05 fiscal year reached \$822 million.

Thirty-one percent of those revenues came from "Government Grants and Contracts." While the federal government, because of the Hyde Amendment, does not fund abortions except in the extremely rare cases of rape, incest, or a threat to the mother's life, many states pay for any abortion performed by a medical professional on a Medicaid-eligible woman, either because of policies adopted by the state legislatures or imposed by state courts.

The dependence of Planned Parenthood on such government largesse was made clear once again this past year when Texas slashed its family planning budget and redirected as much as \$10 million of its funds to federally qualified health centers which provide family planning services but do not perform abortions or other medical procedures (Juliet Eastland, "Abortion in Texas," www.planned-parenthood.org, 4/6/06). Citing those budget cuts, Planned Parenthood's Hidalgo County affiliate announced that it was closing its clinic in Pharr, Texas, a McAllen suburb, in September 2005 (Heather Merriman, "Birth Control Crisis," www.plannedparenthood.org, 11/1/06).

Planned Parenthood's "Clinic Income" alone for 2004-05 was \$346.8 million. Planned Parenthood clinics advertise and perform expensive surgical abortions well into the second trimester. But even if every abortion performed at Planned Parenthood was a standard first-

trimester vacuum curettage surgical abortion, its profits from abortion would be at least \$95 million—over a quarter of its clinic revenues.

Marketing Abortion

Where does that money go? The report lists general categories such as “Medical Services” (\$520.8 million), which include abortions, abortionists’ salaries, etc., as well as “Sexuality Education” (\$45.4 million), “Public Policy” (\$41.2 million), “Services to the Field of Family Planning” (\$25.2 million), and “Services to Affiliates” (\$26.3 million). Corresponding page numbers for some of these later categories reference activities such as Planned Parenthood’s “Real Life. Real Talk” social marketing initiative, a “peer education” program that trains teens “to provide sexual health information and referrals for their peers”;³ Planned Parenthood’s web sites, www.plannedparenthood.org and www.teenwire.com, which allow surfers to set up appointments at Planned Parenthood clinics; and programs of PPFA-International in 23 countries “to move the reproductive rights agenda forward.”

Money spent on “Public Policy” included efforts to “protect *Roe v. Wade*,” fighting judicial nominees it thought might restore legal protection to the unborn, a campaign to mobilize activists, a “new generation of pro-choice Americans,” and promotion of the “Prevention First Act,” a ploy by Planned Parenthood backed legislators to reduce “the need for abortion” by putting more funding into Planned Parenthood’s already bulging coffers.

Fighting for Abortion in the Courts

In the courts, Planned Parenthood proudly says that it obtained injunctions against two state laws it said “imposed unreasonable requirements on what doctors would have discuss with women patients prior to providing an abortion.” In other words, Planned Parenthood lawyers stymied popular right-to-know laws that would have insured that women knew about the risks of the procedure they were considering, the developmental stage of the unborn child they were carrying, and alternatives that would prove better for both mother and child.

Despite statements that it believes in “trusting individuals and providing them with the information they need to make well-informed decisions about ... childbearing,” Planned Parenthood has consistently opposed informed consent legislation, paternalistically reserving to itself the right to be the sole arbiter of what women do and do not hear.

Planned Parenthood rarely uses the term “Partial-Birth Abortion” and even less frequently explains what it entails. However the annual report does mention partial-birth cases that are now on the doorstep of the Supreme Court. “We were successful in defending on appeal the rulings of two federal district counts that had found unconstitutional abortion restrictions,” says Planned Parenthood.

Last month when the Supreme Court announced that it would hear a second challenge to the 2003 Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, Planned Parenthood issued a statement on its web site: “This dangerous law should be struck down, sending a message to politicians to stop legislating medicine.” The cruelty to a child, being partially delivered, having his or her skull punctured and brains sucked out, is never addressed by PPFA.

Reducing Abortion?

Planned Parenthood argues that it is “pro-choice,” not pro-abortion, and says that its aims and activities are directed not toward increasing, but decreasing “the need for abortion.” The available evidence says otherwise.

On its web site, Planned Parenthood says that “Pro-choice means supporting access to all reproductive options—whether it’s motherhood, contraception, abortion, or adoption ...”⁴ If Planned Parenthood supports access to all options without favoring any in particular, why do abortion services at Planned Parenthood consistently outnumber its prenatal patients, its infertility clients, and adoption referrals by more than 180 to 1?

In announcing the opening of a new “express clinic” in Minnesota, Sarah Stoesz, head of Planned Parenthood’s regional affiliate, said that the new clinic would “reduce the rate on unintended pregnancy, which will reduce the rate of abortion” (Washington Post, 5/21/06) Planned Parenthood’s ideologues may really believe this, but statistical evidence doesn’t support the theory. Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life looked at the state’s abortions by county for 2001 and found that when Planned Parenthood opened a clinic in St. Cloud in 2001, abortions rose by 10% in the immediate four-county area while dropping 7% statewide.

Change for the Better?

Even though abortions have decreased significantly in the United States since 1990, abortions at Planned Parenthood have increased nearly every year. The chain is now responsible for nearly one out of every five abortions done in the country.

If statements by Richards and information from the latest annual report are any indication, recent changes in management and marketing do not signal a retreat but an even more aggressive effort to politically push abortion and further increase the chain’s market share.

The more people find out about who Planned Parenthood really is and what it does, though, the harder it will be for the organization to sell its product and garner public support. Get the word out and those dollars will dwindle and the abortions will finally begin to come down. That would be a change for the better.

Editor’s note. An extended version of this article appears on NRLC’s web page at www.nrlc.org. That version includes additional information about PPFA President Cecile Richards, the lavish salaries paid to its executives, and PPFA’s “religious” outreach.

Notes

1. The report can be found at www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/portal/files/portal/aboutus/whoware/report-05.pdf for those wishing to download a copy.
2. The ectopic pregnancies of several RU486 patients have ruptured after going undetected, with at least one woman dying in Tennessee in 2001.
3. Described by Michael McGee, “Social Marketing for Sexual Health” in Planned Parenthood’s Educator’s Update, Vol. 7, No. 5 (April 2003) on www.plannedparenthood.org.
4. “what does it mean to be pro-choice?” www.plannedparenthood.org, accessed 7/3/06.