

BACKGROUND MEMO

August 4, 2015

To: Interested Reporters & Editors

From: Tatiana Bergum, Deputy Press Secretary
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www.nrlc.org/communications

Re: Planned Parenthood Federation of America & Abortion

This memo may be downloaded in PDF here:

<http://www.nrlc.org/uploads/communications/080415PPBackgroundMemo.pdf>

Following the release of a series of videos by The Center for Medical Progress showing senior Planned Parenthood officials engaged in conversations about harvesting and trafficking body parts of unborn children killed by abortion, more than a few media outlets have disseminated certain misleading statements about Planned Parenthood. Indeed, some organs of the mainstream news media seem to be engaged in little more than stenography for Planned Parenthood and the crisis communications firm that they have hired – disseminating their spin without any attempt at critical scrutiny.

What follows below is a run down of background information, and related links, that journalists who wish to engage in original reporting on the Planned Parenthood story may find useful.

Planned Parenthood's Abortion Business

A claim repeated like a mantra by Planned Parenthood, and uncritically transmitted by many journalists, is that abortion makes up “only 3%” of Planned Parenthood’s “services.” But Planned Parenthood counts everything given to, or done to, a given patient as a separate “service.” For example: every pregnant woman who enters a Planned Parenthood clinic for an abortion, may also have a pregnancy test, STD screening, and may receive birth control pills. Each of these counts as a “service;” thus, a woman who walks in for an abortion receives not one, but four “services.” (This doesn’t include other “services” that may be required for the abortion itself.)

Slate Senior Editor Rachel Larimore, in a piece titled [“The Most Meaningless Abortion Statistic Ever,”](#) observed, “It [3%] might not be a technically incorrect number, but it is meaningless – to the point of being downright silly – for several reasons. Not the least of which being that Planned Parenthood ‘unbundles’ all of its services...”

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Yesterday, [Politifact once again looked at the way Planned Parenthood calculates its services](#) – in essence, that it bundles abortion with pregnancy tests, STD testing and treatment, contraception, and the like. (The *Politifact* piece also dispels another myth perpetuated as a defense of the abortion giant that often appears in news accounts, namely that Planned Parenthood provides mammograms: “While mammograms are considered a form of preventive care, Planned Parenthood doesn’t do their own mammograms. Clinics perform breast exams and refer patients to outside clinics for an actual mammogram.”)

And today, Rich Lowry of *National Review* wrote in [“The 3% Dodge:”](#)

The 3 percent factoid is crafted to obscure the reality of Planned Parenthood’s business. The group performs about 330,000 abortions a year, or roughly 30 percent of all the abortions in the country. By its own accounting in its 2013–2014 annual report, it provides about as many abortions as Pap tests (380,000). The group does more breast exams and provides more breast-care services (490,000), but not by that much.

“The 3 percent figure is an artifice and a dodge, but even taking it on its own terms, it’s not much of a defense. So abortion is considered a service no different than a pregnancy test (1.1 million), even though a box with two pregnancy tests can be procured from the local drugstore for less than \$10.

In short, the 3% figure is purposefully misleading. A much more instructive measure is to look at the numbers of clients, rather than the number of “services.” Based on data from their own annual report from 2008-2009 (where the 3% figure made its first appearance), nearly one in eight women walking through the door of a Planned Parenthood clinic has an abortion.

In an undercover video recorded on July 25, 2014, by investigators from The Center for Medical Progress, Dr. Deborah Nucatola, senior director for medical services for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said, “We have 40 percent of the [abortion] market in the whole country.” [[Transcript, page 25](#)] She added, “Because what’s happening is, the laws, the legal environment, is not shutting us down. They’re shutting everyone else down.” [[Transcript, page 26](#)]

See:

“The Most Meaningless Abortion Statistic Ever,” Rachel Larimore, *Slate*, May 7, 2013.

(http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/05/07/3_percent_of_planned_parenthood_s_services_are_a_bortion_but_what_about.html)

Q&A with NRLC Director of Education & Research Randall K. O’Bannon, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News*, April/May 2011.

(<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/NewsOnline/April-May2011/QandAOBannon.html>)

“97% of Planned Parenthood’s work is mammograms, preventive care, O’Malley says,” Lewis Carroll, *Politifact*, August 3, 2015

(<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2015/aug/03/martin-omalley/97-planned-parenthoods-work-mammograms-preventive-/>)

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“The 3% Dodge,” Rich Lowry, *National Review*, August 4, 2015

(<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/421981/planned-parenthood-dishonest-3-percent-figure>)

The Center for Medical Progress, Transcript of Video with Dr. Deborah Nucatola, July 25, 2014.

(http://www.centerformedicalprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PPFAtranscript072514_final.pdf)

Abortion Income: Direct and indirect

Rather than parrot the phony “3%” figure, conscientious journalists might be better advised to apply Deep Throat’s dictum: “Follow the money.”

As Larimore wrote for *Slate*, “[I]t’s easy to calculate, [as *The Weekly Standard* did](#), that Planned Parenthood gets at least a third of its clinic income – and more than 10 percent of all its revenue, government funding included – from its abortion procedures.”

[In their 2013-2014 annual report](#), Planned Parenthood reported that its clinics performed 327,653 abortions in 2013. This is up slightly from 2012’s 327,166, but just a bit below 2011’s record 333,964.

The stability of Planned Parenthood’s abortion count – between 324,000 and 334,000 since 2008 – is remarkable, given that national figures for abortions have been in a nosedive since 2008; they have dropped 13% in just three years.

At the going rate for standard surgical abortion at 10 weeks (\$451 is the figure from Guttmacher for 2009), the 327,653 abortions performed by Planned Parenthood would represent at least \$147.7 million. That does not take into account the greater cost of chemical abortions, which are a big part of Planned Parenthood’s total and are heavily promoted and widely available at its clinics.

Nor does the figure take into consideration that many PPFA clinics offer considerably more expensive second-trimester abortions (over a hundred clinics, with more than a dozen of those offering abortions at 20 weeks or more), meaning that \$147.7 million is likely an extremely conservative figure.

Not often talked about is that when women come into Planned Parenthood for abortion, they are also sold pregnancy tests, contraceptives, and may be tested and treated for sexually transmitted diseases or infections. These will be counted and costed as separate “services” but all may be connected to the abortion visit.

See:

“The Most Meaningless Abortion Statistic Ever,” Rachel Larimore, *Slate*, May 7, 2013.

(http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/05/07/3_percent_of_planned_parenthood_s_services_are_a_bortion_but_what_about.html)

“Planned Parenthood’s Unseemly Empire,” Charlotte Allen, *The Weekly Standard*, October 22, 2007.

(<http://www.nrlc.org/uploads/ahc/PlannedParenthoodEmpireWeeklyStandard.pdf>)

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“Planned Parenthood 2013-2014 Annual Report: Pro-Abortion, Prosperous, and Proud,” Randall K. O’Bannon, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News Today*, January 7, 2015

(<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/news/2015/01/planned-parenthood-2013-2014-annual-report-pro-abortion-prosperous-and-proud>)

Planned Parenthood’s 2013-2014 Annual Report:

http://plannedparenthood.org/files/6714/1996/2641/2013-2014_Annual_Report_FINAL_WEB_VERSION.pdf

Government Income

[In their 2013-2014 annual report](#), Planned Parenthood revenues exceeded \$1.3 billion. The same report shows that 41% of its revenues are from “Government Health Services Grants & Reimbursements,” or \$528.4 million.

These are services or programs paid for by local, state, or federal governments. While law prevents federal dollars from paying directly for abortion (but those dollars sustain the entire infrastructure of the Planned Parenthood empire, and make it possible for the organization to provide far more abortions than would otherwise be possible), many state and local governments do fund abortions, helping to keep the abortion giant running.

(It is also worth noting that [on page 22 of their annual report for 2013-2014](#), Planned Parenthood reported a combined \$127.1 million as “Excess of Revenue Over Expenses” for its national office and its affiliates. Further, they reported combined net assets of \$1.416 billion.)

According to a [U.S. Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) report released March 20, 2015](#), Planned Parenthood Federation of America received \$344.5 million in federal funds over three fiscal years (2010-2012), and another \$1.2 billion in funding from Medicaid (including a combination of state and federal funds), for a total of \$1.5 billion over three years from federal programs.

See:

“[Planned Parenthood 2013-2014 Annual Report: Pro-Abortion, Prosperous, and Proud](#),” Randall K. O’Bannon, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News Today*, January 7, 2015

Government Accountability Report, March 20, 2015

(<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/669140.pdf>)

Planned Parenthood’s 2013-2014 Annual Report:

http://plannedparenthood.org/files/6714/1996/2641/2013-2014_Annual_Report_FINAL_WEB_VERSION.pdf

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The American Public is Unaware Planned Parenthood Performs Abortion

A 2013 poll conducted by The Polling Company found that a substantial majority of registered voters say they are familiar with Planned Parenthood, but a majority did not know that Planned Parenthood performs abortions.

Specifically, 88% said that they were familiar with Planned Parenthood with 41% saying that they were very familiar and 47% saying that they were somewhat familiar. 40% said they knew someone who had received services at a Planned Parenthood.

Although 63% said that they had a favorable opinion of Planned Parenthood, including 38% of those who identified themselves as pro-life, 55% of those polled did not know that Planned Parenthood performs abortions. (Even 50% of pro-life respondents did not know that Planned Parenthood performs abortions.)

Of the 45% who knew that Planned Parenthood performs abortions, the majority greatly underestimated the number of abortions Planned Parenthood performs annually.

Obviously, these 2013 poll results do not reflect any changes in public awareness that may have resulted from the controversy engendered by the release of a series of undercover videos by The Center for Medical Progress, which began on July 14, 2015. Reportedly, Planned Parenthood Federation of America has hired a “crisis management” team, associated with the public relations firm SKDKnickerbocker, to help limit the damage to its public image.

See:

“Most Say They Are Familiar with Planned Parenthood – But Don’t Know Planned Parenthood Performs Abortions,” David N. O’Steen, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News Today*, April 26, 2013
(<http://www.nationalrighttolifeneews.org/news/2013/04/most-say-they-are-familiar-with-planned-parenthood-but-dont-know-planned-parenthood-performs-abortion>)

Complete Citations, Other Resources & Articles of Interest

The following are additional articles of interest and resources that journalists engaged in original reporting on Planned Parenthood may find useful in their research/

National Right to Life Resource Page on Planned Parenthood:
<http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/plannedparenthood/>

Planned Parenthood’s 2013-2014 Annual Report:
http://plannedparenthood.org/files/6714/1996/2641/2013-2014_Annual_Report_FINAL_WEB_VERSION.pdf

“The 3% Dodge,” Rich Lowry, *National Review*, August 4, 2015
(<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/421981/planned-parenthood-dishonest-3-percent-figure>)

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“97% of Planned Parenthood’s work is mammograms, preventive care, O’Malley says,” Lewis Carroll, *Politifact*, August 3, 2015

(<http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2015/aug/03/martin-omalley/97-planned-parenthoods-work-mammograms-preventive-/>)

Government Accountability Report, March 20, 2015

(<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/669140.pdf>)

“[Planned Parenthood 2013-2014 Annual Report: Pro-Abortion, Prosperous, and Proud](#),”

Randall K. O’Bannon, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News Today*, January 7, 2015

“Planned Parenthood Pulls Out All the Stops in Late Election Blitz,” Randall K.

O’Bannon, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News Today*, November 4, 2014

(<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/news/2014/11/planned-parenthood-pulls-out-all-the-stops-in-late-election-blitz>)

The Center for Medical Progress, Transcript of Video with Dr. Deborah Nucatola, July

25, 2014. (http://www.centerformedicalprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/PPFAtranscript072514_final.pdf)

“The Most Meaningless Abortion Statistic Ever,” Rachel Larimore, *Slate*, May 7, 2013.

(http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/05/07/3_percent_of_planned_parenthoods_services_are_abortion_but_what_about.html)

“Most Say They Are Familiar with Planned Parenthood – But Don’t Know Planned Parenthood Performs Abortions,” David N. O’Steen, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News Today*, April 26, 2013

(<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/news/2013/04/most-say-they-are-familiar-with-planned-parenthood-but-dont-know-planned-parenthood-performs-abortions>)

40 Years of *Roe v. Wade*: Planned Parenthood Becomes Abortion Empire, Randall K.

O’Bannon, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News*, Winter 2013

(<http://www.nrlc.org/news/13/winter13news/abortionempirepage8/>)

“Answering Deceptive Arguments Made by Planned Parenthood,” Randall K. O’Bannon, Ph.D., *National Right to Life News Today*, February 4, 2012

(<http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/news/2012/02/answering-deceptive-arguments-made-by-planned-parenthood>)

“Planned Parenthood’s Unseemly Empire,” Charlotte Allen, *The Weekly Standard*, October 22, 2007.

(<http://www.nrlc.org/uploads/ahc/PlannedParenthoodEmpireWeeklyStandard.pdf>)