



## Opinion

### Guest Commentary: Planned Parenthood has big plans

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By Vicki Evans

Economic times are tough and not many businesses are in an expansion mode. But Planned Parenthood is. It's expanding its physical plant size, implementing plans for increasing its professional workforce, and broadening its customer base. Moreover, it is benefiting from significant new sources of capital. What's the product that puts Planned Parenthood in this enviable position? Abortion.

Freestanding abortion clinics now provide over 90 percent of abortions performed. Planned Parenthood's share of that market is 25 percent and growing, with abortion being its most lucrative profit center. Its current business plan entails closing down unprofitable clinics and consolidating operations into "abortion mega-centers."

Over the past three years alone, abortion mega-centers have popped up across the country. Outside Chicago, a 22,000 sq. ft. center opened to community protests. This was followed by a 46,000 sq. ft. center in St. Paul, a 33,000 sq. ft. two-story center in Massachusetts, and a 52,000 sq. ft. facility in Denver. In 2009, Houston became home to what is touted as "the largest abortion facility in the world." It is a seven-story, 78,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art building close to the University of Houston and Texas Southern University and within walking distance of black and Hispanic neighborhoods.

By carefully choosing its locations, Planned Parenthood can maximize its clientele and increase its customer base exponentially. University towns and economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods are fertile ground for abortion sales. The economic downturn has been turned into a positive marketing tool in that women can more easily be encouraged to abort because "they can't afford a baby in this bad economy." Another obvious advantage of these imposing structures is the ease of keeping the opposition at bay. That includes sidewalk counselors and others whose prayerful presence outside an abortion mill would seem to imply that there just might be something wrong with what Planned Parenthood is selling.

Doctors have had these misgivings from the start. Medicine is a healing art that cures, treats or alleviates a disease. Pregnancy is not a disease and killing doesn't generally fit into the definition of healing. The abortionist has historically been stigmatized by society as well as by fellow doctors. Although nearly half the country claims to be "pro-choice," there remains a chasm between those approving of abortion and those physically performing the act. Abortion may be an essential reproductive right in the abstract, but the reality of performing one is still grotesque.

*The New York Times* tells us, however, that this is about to change. In an article published last month called "The New Abortion Providers" by Emily Bazelon, we learn there is a well-funded campaign under way to increase the number of trained abortion providers and bring them into the medical mainstream, where abortion can be "embraced and not shunned." These training programs are made possible through generous grants from the Family Planning Fellowship and the Kenneth J. Ryan Training Program. Both are funded by the Buffet Foundation which, according to its 2008 tax records, paid out \$50 million to universities to subsidize the programs and another \$53 million directly to Planned Parenthood.

The Times described the Family Planning Fellowship as a “two-year stint following residency that pays doctors to sharpen their skills in abortion and contraception.” It has expanded into 21 universities to date including Stanford, UCLA and UCSF, described as “the hub of the abortion-rights countermovement in medicine.” Whether these programs will succeed in attracting doctors, mainstreaming abortion, and increasing access to abortion remains to be seen.

A healthy influx of capital is another sign of a thriving business and Planned Parenthood’s future appears bright here as well. Besides profits from its abortion business segment and multimillion dollar gifts from family foundations like the Buffet Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the John D. Rockefeller Foundation, another spigot of almost limitless funds is available—taxpayer dollars. To date, this pool of funds has accounted for about one-third of its gross receipts.

Obama Care, in its present form, has the potential to increase federal government subsidies to Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers in two ways. First, in the high-risk pool program. The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service issued a report confirming that neither the health care law itself, nor the executive order on abortion, nor the longstanding Hyde Amendment prevent the use of funds in the new high-risk pool program from being used to cover all abortions. Second, up to \$11 billion dollars is earmarked for “community health centers.” According to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, there is nothing in the law to prevent these funds from being used for elective abortion.

Will these factors converge to create a perfect storm for abortion-industry expansion? This is all happening at a time when polls show that more Americans call themselves pro-life than pro-choice, particularly among young people. It is also a time when San Francisco produced the 40,000-participant Walk for Life West Coast in a city that is known for its open hostility toward those who refuse to move in lockstep on the road to unlimited abortion license.

The one thing that is missing in Planned Parenthood’s business plan is ethics. This is something people do recognize over time—sometimes a long time. Without an ethical foundation, it’s a house of cards.

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