

Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast

July 24, 2015

State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of the Secretary
P.O. Box 629
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

VIA EMAIL AND CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Dear Secretary Kliebert:

As a high-quality provider of medical care to women across Louisiana and Texas, ensuring the health and safety of our patients is fundamental. Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast (“PPGC”)¹ and its predecessors have provided high-quality, affordable health care in Louisiana for thirty years. Like other Planned Parenthood affiliates, PPGC bases its medical care on the expert recommendations of leading medical organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Society for Family Planning, and World Health Organization. PPGC’s top priority is the compassionate care that we provide.

On July 14, an organization calling itself the “Center for Medical Progress” released a heavily and deceptively edited video purporting to show an official from Planned Parenthood’s national office discussing prices for the illegal sale of fetal tissue from abortion. The full, unedited video makes it clear that any tissue donation discussed is done with full patient consent, at no financial benefit to any Planned Parenthood organization, and in full compliance with the law.

These accusations are false and outrageous. The “Center for Medical Progress” is affiliated with Live Action, whose past sting efforts against Planned Parenthood have been widely discredited. David Daleiden, the founder and “project lead” at the Center for Medical Progress, is the former “director of research” for Live Action. For this video, he created a fake company called BioMax in order to secretly videotape abortion providers and make outrageous claims about programs that help women donate fetal tissue for medical research.

Some Planned Parenthood affiliates may help patients who wish to donate fetal tissue, just like other health care providers do. Stem cell research and other tissue research can lead to important scientific and medical breakthroughs, such as the polio vaccine and

¹ Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas, Inc. merged with Planned Parenthood of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta, Inc. to create Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, Inc., a Texas non-profit corporation, on September 1, 2010. PPGC has a Certificate of Authority to Transact Business in Louisiana.

research into many diseases such as Parkinson’s and diabetes. Women and families who make the decision to donate fetal tissue for lifesaving scientific research should be honored, not attacked and demeaned. Planned Parenthood’s national office has clear medical practices and guidelines in this area, which require that Planned Parenthood organizations that do this important work do it just like other high-quality health care providers — with full, appropriate consent from patients, under the highest ethical and legal standards, and with no financial benefit for the patient or to any Planned Parenthood organization

In your letter dated July 15, you refer to Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast. By way of clarity, Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, Inc. was incorporated in Texas in 1936, and does not offer abortion services. Currently, Planned Parenthood Center for Choice, Inc. (“PPCFC”) provides safe, legal abortion services in the Houston area. PPCFC was incorporated in Texas in 2005 and has a Certificate of Authority to Transact Business in Louisiana. Prior to 2005, PPCFC operated as a department of PPGC. As either a standalone corporation or a division of PPGC, PPCFC has provided abortion services since 1973. PPCFC and PPGC are both non-profit health care provider entities, and affiliates of Planned Parenthood’s national office, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (“PPFA”). PPCFC will lease space in PPGC’s new health center located at 4636 S. Claiborne Avenue, and PPCFC intends to seek a license to provide abortions at that location.

While PPCFC does not have fetal tissue donation programs in Texas currently, it is our understanding that some Planned Parenthood organizations in other states do, and to the best of our knowledge they follow all laws and ethical guidelines.

Below, please find the answers to the questions from your letter dated July 15, 2015. These answers are on behalf of PPGC and PPCFC; PPGC and PPCFC have no basis to provide information about the practices of other affiliates of PPFA, none of which operate health centers or otherwise do business in Louisiana.

1. **Question:** How do Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, dispose of unborn baby remains? Please provide us with details of that process.

Answer: PPGC does not provide abortion services. PPCFC does not currently provide abortion services in Louisiana, as it is not yet licensed to do so.

Under Texas law, products of spontaneous or induced human abortions, regardless of the period of gestation, fall under the definition of “Pathological Waste.”² Pathological Waste is included in the definition of “Special Waste from Health Care-Related Facilities,”³ which requires certain treatment and disposition under the Texas

² 25 TAC §1.132(40)(B).

³ 25 TAC §1.132(44).

Administrative Code.⁴ PPCFC disposes of Pathological Waste through an entity that is licensed for disposal of Special Waste from Health Care-Related Facilities.”

In Texas, immediately following an abortion or miscarriage management, the products of conception (“POC”) are evaluated for completeness and gross abnormalities to ensure patient health and safety. If there are no concerns, it is securely stored until it is picked up by the licensed entity, which then disposes of it in compliance with the Pathological Waste disposal requirements of 25 TAC §1.136(a)(4)(B) by incinerating it.

2. **Question:** Do any Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, sell or donate any unborn baby organs or body parts?

Answer: No.

3. **Question:** Do any Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, contract with companies that assist Planned Parenthood with disposing of, donating, or selling of unborn baby organs or body parts? If so, please describe exactly what these companies do with the unborn baby remains.

Answer: Yes, PPCFC contracts with a company to dispose of its Special Waste from Health Care-Related Facilities, which includes Pathological Waste from PPCFC.

4. **Question:** Please provide the names and addresses of any and all companies that Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, contract with for the disposal, donation, or sale of unborn baby organs or body parts.

Answer: As discussed above, PPCFC contracts with Oncore Technology, LLC for the disposal of Special Waste from Health Care-Related Facilities, including Pathological Waste. Oncore’s address is 2613 Skyway Dr. Grand Prairie, TX 75052. PPCFC does not contract with anyone for the donation or sale of fetal tissue.

5. **Question:** How many clinics operated by Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, do business with StemExpress, or any other organizations in the business of selling or donating the remains of unborn babies?

Answer: None.

6. **Question:** What information do you provide to the women in Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, regarding the selling, donation, and/or disposal of their unborn baby’s body parts?

⁴ 25 TAC §1.133 exempts human tissue, including fetal tissue, donated for research or teaching purposes, with the consent of the person authorized to consent as otherwise provided by law, to an institution of higher learning, medical school, a teaching hospital affiliated with a medical school, or to a research institution or individual investigator subject to the jurisdiction of an institutional review board required by 42 United States Codes 289 from Special Waste from Health Care-Related Facility treatment requirements.

Answer: This is not an issue in Louisiana, as PPGC and PPCFC do not provide abortions there. In Texas, PPCFC does not affirmatively provide information on donation of fetal tissue to women, as PPCFC does not currently participate in any fetal tissue donation programs. If a woman asks what happens to the Pathological Waste after her abortion or miscarriage management, she is told the above information in answer 1.

7. **Question:** Please confirm that no existing Louisiana Planned Parenthood facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, offer abortion or abortion-related services, given that none of your Louisiana facilities are licensed as abortion providers.

Answer: That is correct—no existing PPGC or PPCFC facilities offer abortion or abortion-related services in Louisiana.

8. **Question:** How many Louisiana Planned Parenthood facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, offer pregnancy option information that directs patients to abortion clinics that do business with StemExpress, the Planned Parenthood partner that boasts about “financial profits” that come from harvesting and distributing aborted unborn baby body parts?

Answer: When a patient at one of our Louisiana PPGC health centers requests information on pregnancy options, she is given options regarding carrying the pregnancy to term, parenting, adoption, or abortion. Specifically, she is given a sheet that lists multiple adoption assistance agencies and services, prenatal care agencies and services, pregnancy resources, and abortion providers. We cannot speak as to whether other abortion providers have fetal tissue donation programs, or with whom they partner for such programs.

9. **Question:** How many existing Louisiana Planned Parenthood facilities, or any affiliates, subsidiaries or associates thereof, have business ties of any kind with StemExpress, or any other organizations in the business of selling or donating the remains of unborn babies?

Answer: PPGC’s Louisiana health centers have no business ties with StemExpress, or any other organization in the business of fetal tissue donation.

10. **Question:** Will the New Orleans clinic for which you are planning to apply to DHH for a license have any business ties with StemExpress, or any other organizations in the business of selling or donating the remains of unborn babies?

Answer: We have no current plans to partner with StemExpress or to participate in fetal tissue donation at the New Orleans clinic. If we do so in the future, it would be in full compliance with applicable state and federal law.

11. **Question:** Your website notes that you offer “alternative pregnancy options.” Where do you direct people interested in alternative pregnancy options? Have you verified that

these facilities do not have any business ties with StemExpress or any other organizations in the business of selling or donating the remains of unborn babies?

Answer: There is no mention of “alternative pregnancy options” on PPGC, PPCFC, or PPFA’s website. PPCFC refers all abortion patients to the Texas state-mandated “A Woman’s Right to Know Resource Guide.”⁵

Sincerely,



Melaney A. Linton
President and CEO
Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast, Inc.
Planned Parenthood Center for Choice, Inc.

⁵ <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wrtk/pdf/directoryupdate0606.pdf>