



**HUMAN CAPITAL** project

## Fact Sheet: Tissue Procurement Organizations (TPOs)

**Tissue Procurement Organizations (TPOs)** are “middleman” companies that procure human tissue samples and supply them to researchers. There are several TPOs that specialize in or are devoted entirely to selling aborted fetal tissue:

**Advanced Bioscience Resources (ABR)** – ABR, headquartered in Alameda, CA, is the largest and oldest fetal tissue seller in the U.S. ABR was founded in 1989<sup>1</sup> by Linda Tracy, a nurse who had previously worked for the National Disease Research Interchange (NDRI) in Philadelphia, PA. At the time, NDRI was also involved in fetal tissue sales. Today, ABR operates in abortion clinics in California, Minnesota, Oregon, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and an unknown number of other states. ABR is organized as a 501(c)3 non-profit, but brings in over \$1-1.5 million in fetal tissue sales revenue each year.<sup>2</sup>

**StemExpress, LLC** – StemExpress, based in Placerville, CA, was founded in 2010 by Cate Dyer, a former procurement technician for ABR. StemExpress has close ties to Planned Parenthood and employs Planned Parenthood abortion doctor Ronald Berman as its Medical Director.<sup>3</sup> StemExpress charges \$595 per fetal tissue specimen and had a yearly revenue of \$2.2 million in 2014.<sup>4</sup>

**Novogenix Laboratories, LLC** – Novogenix was founded by Dr. Ben Van Handel while a graduate student at UCLA.<sup>5</sup> Novogenix is partnered with Planned Parenthood Los Angeles and is the TPO served by PPFA Senior Director of Medical Services, Dr. Deborah Nucatola.

**SciKon Innovation** – SciKon is a more generalized human biologics company located in Chapel Hill, NC. However, like many TPOs, SciKon does offer aborted fetal tissue procurement to clients as a custom product.

**Anatomic Gift Foundation (AGF)** – A non-profit company established in 1994, one of the largest and oldest whole body donation programs. AGF was heavily involved in fetal tissue sales in the 1990s, although claims to have ended its fetal tissue procurement since then. However, AGF is cited as the source of 7 aborted fetal kidneys used in a 2014 study.<sup>6,7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Overview,” Advanced Bioscience Resources, Inc. <http://www.centerformedicalprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/OVERVIEW.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See 2013, 2012, and 2011 IRS Form 990-PF for ABR, <http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2013/943/110/2013-943110160-0ae637bf-F.pdf>, <http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2012/943/110/2012-943110160-09c27aff-F.pdf>, and <http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2011/943/110/2011-943110160-08be399f-F.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> “Dr. Ron Berman,” StemExpress. <http://stemexpress.com/team/dr-ron-berman/>

<sup>4</sup> Schneider, Kirsten, “Fast-Growing StemExpress Provides Clinical Specimens to Advance Research.” SARTA 18 February 2014. <http://sarta.org/blog/fast-growing-stemexpress-provides-clinical-specimens-to-advance-research/>

<sup>5</sup> “B.V.H., A.H., and M.M. are cofounders of and own significant financial stakes in Novogenix Laboratories, LLC.” See Mikkola et al, “The first trimester human placenta is a site for terminal maturation of primitive erythroid cells.” *Blood* 28 October 2010. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2995359/>

<sup>6</sup> Ben-Dov et al. “Urine MicroRNA as Potential Biomarkers of Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease Progression: Description of miRNA Profiles at Baseline.” *PLOS ONE* 29 January 2014. <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0086856>

<sup>7</sup> Flatten, Mark. “Horror stories show body procurement trade.” *East Valley Tribune* 12 July 2004. [http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/special\\_reports/bodymarket/article\\_ffb7810b-d443-536f-857e-7d6cd38bd775.html](http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/special_reports/bodymarket/article_ffb7810b-d443-536f-857e-7d6cd38bd775.html)