

TRANSCRIPT BY THE CENTER FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

26 February 2015

Speakers:

-Carolyn Westhoff, MD, *Senior Medical Advisor, Planned Parenthood Federation of America* (“**PPFA**”)

-Two actors posing as Fetal Tissue Procurement Company (“**Buyer**”)

frame counts are approximate

036700

Buyer: Sorry to interrupt, Dr. Westhoff, but Dr. Nucatola has mentioned your name before as a good contact.

PPFA: Hey!

Buyer: [Name]. And you just met my procurement technician. We do fetal tissue collections and other specimen collections--

PPFA: Oh!

Buyer: Yeah yeah. So, I don't know, Deborah's kind of been our contact on the national level for the past 8 months or so,

PPFA: Yeah!

Buyer: Because we're a start-up, we're very very new, just been--

PPFA: Where are you based?

Buyer: We're based in southern California.

PPFA: Okay.

Buyer: And so I don't know if it's something you have experience with in the past, or--

PPFA: Well yes, so we do, I mean, for research purposes, at Columbia, we have a lot of people who get tissue from our group at Columbia for various studies.

Buyer: So that's kind of the hub in the northeast.

TRANSCRIPT BY THE CENTER FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

PPFA: Oh, I don't know if it's a hub. [laughter] We just have a lot of--but so, what do you do?

Buyer: So, we can provide a variety of human biospecimens, fetal, adult, we're doing actually a lot of adipose tissue research in the past year.

PPFA: You function as sort of a library for investigators?

Buyer: Not a library, no, we provide mainly fresh specimens.

PPFA: Oh!

Buyer: For stem cell research, regenerative medicine, cell-based therapies, primarily. And we're basically just trying to, we're middlemen, we're connectors. Yeah.

PPFA: Yeah. Well that's good. There was a tissue bank at Einstein, and Bill Rashbaum--

Buyer: The Fetal Tissue Repository.

PPFA: Yes, and I think they closed it.

Buyer: No! I have spoken with Dr. Poulos who runs it actually, but it is very small, one-man operation. He--

PPFA: I think they're looking to close it.

Buyer: Yeah. He, they're closing it there, and he's moving somewhere else where he says he can get better specimens.

PPFA: Yeah.

Buyer: Which is always the difficult thing, is because you're looking for providers who can kind of facilitate the process and everything, so.

PPFA: Well that's interesting. Yeah. No, I didn't know anyone was doing this as a company. But I mean, the people from Einstein came to visit with us to see if we would take over their repository. And it just seemed like a lot of effort. But you only do fresh tissue, you don't do frozen?

Buyer: Everything we've done is fresh so far. Because the thing is, when it comes to stem cells, every time you freeze and then rethaw, every time you do that you're losing cell viability. And some people will say oh, well if you do it

TRANSCRIPT BY THE CENTER FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

carefully, but you ask any experienced researcher and they'll tell you, they much prefer--

PPFA: I don't think we've been working with anybody who wants stem cells. We've just been working with people who want particular tissues. Like a, you know, cardia--they want cardiac, or they want eyes, or they want neural. And Bill Rashbaum, back in the day at Einstein, was working with people with Parkinson's disease research, who wanted spinal cords. So I mean, that sort of thing. Certainly, everything we provide--oh, gonads. Oh my God, gonads.

Buyer: Yeah.

PPFA: Everything we provide is fresh. But I have the feeling that Einstein had a repository of frozen stuff, maybe I'm wrong about that.

Buyer: Probably, most places--I mean, we're really small, we operate drop ship, it's easier for us. But yeah, some of the larger, more established banks definitely provide frozen. It's really, it's not--

PPFA: Yeah, I don't know anything about the industry.

Buyer: It's really, it's not ideal for research, at least for the regenerative medicine sector. It's not ideal to do frozen-thawed because you lose too much cell viability when you do that. But we've spoken with Deborah before, I don't know kind of where PPFA is nationally with all this right now, because one of the most difficult things is just finding affiliates and finding collection sites that have the volume, and have the gestational age, and all that, and it's just a lot of person-to-person networking that is very time-consuming and if somebody could facilitate that it would be a lot easier.

PPFA: We have a department that is focused on our abortion providers. And the head of the department is here. And I'm sure that they have, in essence, at their fingertips, information about volume, and second tri versus first tri and so on. And I think they would be the right people to explore whether affiliates are different. Obviously, we would have the potential for a huge H--a P.R. issue, by doing this.

Buyer: It's something, we're very discrete about it, everybody has to be very, yeah. Yeah.

PPFA: Well I will make sure--you're here for the whole meeting?

Buyer: Yeah, we'll be here all weekend, as they say.

PPFA: But it's Deb Nucatola you've spoken with so far? I'll make sure you talk to a couple of our national office abortion people.

TRANSCRIPT BY THE CENTER FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

Buyer: Is that people at PPCAPS?

PPFA: Yeah. Have you talked to CAPS at all?

Buyer: Kristin Flood.

PPFA: Okay.

Buyer: She actually connected us to Deborah. So I kind of assumed that sector was exhausted, but--

PPFA: Well, they actually did not have a chief for like 9 months, so there was nobody who was head of that department at that time.

Buyer: Is it Kristin now?

PPFA: No, it's not Kristen. But I'll go find the person who is and get you guys to have a conversation with her.

Buyer: Oh, so they're here?

PPFA: Yeah. Do you have cards?

Buyer: Yeah, actually, we've got--

PPFA: Not that I have pockets!

Buyer: Yeah, do you want to wait until tomorrow?

PPFA: Oh, nametags! Here we go. Yes, give me cards and I can put them here. I mean, the worst thing, I like clothes, but my clothes don't have pockets.

Buyer: [Name].

PPFA: Look at that. Designed for people who have low vision too. I like that.

Buyer: Oh. What you need is some stem cells.

PPFA: [laughter] Actually, I have bionic eyes now, they're absolutely fabulous. But I still can't see close-up. I'm 20/18, which is so exciting.

Buyer: Was it, you got LASIK, or--?

PPFA: No, I got lens implants.

Buyer: Oh, wow.

TRANSCRIPT BY THE CENTER FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

PPFA: So I really am bionic.

Buyer: Are they digital, do they do the digital zoom?

PPFA: They have something like that, but I went for the old model. I was afraid I would get headaches. And this is not the kind of thing you want to do twice ever. So I figured, I got the basic optical, but it's very cool. Stigmatism and everything. It's really astonishing. [laughter]

Buyer: Well thank you so much. I'm going to be managing the exhibit hall, so just come visit me.

PPFA: Where is all the exhibit stuff happening?

Buyer: The exhibitors are gonna be in Ballroom B. And then, at this point I'm not allowed to go the sessions, so I'll be there all day.

PPFA: Okay, okay. Well, what I'll do is I'll go find the new CAPS Director, and let her know who you guys are, and she can start thinking about what to do with that.

000000

PPFA: Oh, it's my neighbor! And, I'm going to go--

Buyer: Let me just go--

Buyer: Were you trying to find someone?

PPFA: Yeah, but I don't see her.

Buyer: It's alright, I think we're about it go. It was very good to meet you, we can talk tomorrow. Goodnight.

001800