Fact Sheet: Government Funding of Aborted Fetal Tissue Use

Taxpayers fund aborted baby parts sales with millions of dollars every year. The NIH reports spending a minimum of $76 million in Human Fetal Tissue-specific grants and nearly $1.4 billion in Stem Cell Research grants in 2014.1 These figures represent minimal estimates because the NIH category definitions “do not reflect the entire NIH research portfolio and budget”2 and projects under $500,000 may not be reported. Some research projects may use fetal tissue but be reported as another category.

Federal law has explicit statutory requirements that must be met before the federal government funds fetal tissue experiments. These include requirements that abortion patients to consent to tissue donation only after already having consented to abortion, the timing or method of the abortion not be altered for tissue procurement, the abortion comply with all applicable State laws, and full disclosure of any interest the abortion provider has in the tissue donation.3

The University of Washington Birth Defects Research Laboratory is a major supplier of aborted fetal tissue and receives over a half-million dollars each year in NIH grant money. They seem unconcerned about the law for fetal tissue procurement, and note in their grant applications:

Changes in termination practice, including newer medical, non-surgical procedures, and the use of agents to ensure delivery of nonviable specimens, have created new obstacles to obtaining sufficient amounts of high quality tissue required for research. To overcome these problems and meet increasing demand, the Laboratory has developed new relationships with both local and distant clinics.4

Recent government-funded fetal tissue experiments include:

- 2013 and 2014 studies transplanting cells from 17-22 week aborted fetal brains into lab mice, funded with grants from the NINDS and NIMH divisions of NIH5,6
- Experiments in 2012 with beating fetal hearts purchased from StemExpress were funded with multiple grants from NIH7,8
- 2013 study using normal 24-week fetal eyes “harvested within minutes of death” with funding from multiple NIH grants.9

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3 42 USC 289g-1. https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/289g-1