Planned Parenthood in hysteria campaign

by Linda Everett

If you aren't hysterical about how this country is in a "dark age" respecting birth control technology, then you have not fallen for the depopulation lobby's latest media campaign to sell Americans on the need to pour billions more of their tax dollars into researching, subsidizing, and marketing the very latest in population-control technology.

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. (PPFA) swung into action in late January with national conferences in Boston, Los Angeles, and Chicago, where keynote speaker Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-Col.), decrying abortion politics, presented the federal legislation in which she, Rep. Olympia Snowe (R-Me.), and Planned Parenthood have written. The bills call on Congress to create three federal birth control research institutions and to revamp product liability laws to lure pharmaceutical companies back into making and distributing contraception products and the abortion pill RU-486. Appearing with other abortion aficionados was French researcher Etienne-Emile Baulieu, who developed RU-486. PPFA president Faye Wattleton called it "scandalous that our politicians and policymakers have allowed America's traditional role as a leader in contraceptive research to deteriorate to today's appalling state."

Then, just as Congress faced a half-dozen bills for vastly expanded federal funding of Title X—abortion and teen sex "research"—Planned Parenthood's sibling, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, went into action, and fortuitously released several "studies." One states that public-sector savings in welfare costs result from tax funded contraceptive services; another alleges that state restrictions on abortion "pose serious threat to women's health." With lots of Title X abortion funds on the line, another study claims that inner-city black teens who have abortions do "better" economically and emotionally than those girls (who usually have lower grades) who elect to give birth. Now, Alan Guttmacher was president of PPFA for over a decade, and his institute spins out "studies" (often with federal funds) that bring in tens of millions of tax dollars every year in federal contracts for Planned Parenthood and its affiliates. Nifty arrangement.

The next salvo came from the National Research Council (NRC) which, with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released their joint report, "Developing New Contraceptives: Obstacles And Opportunities" ($19.95, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.) on Feb. 14. It states that the United States is decades behind Europe in contraceptive development and availability. They blame the regulatory and legal climate for new contraceptive development and mammoth increase in liability insurance premiums, for driving all but one pharmaceutical company out of the field. The study was requested and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The advisory committee called for changes in the methods the Food and Drug Administration uses to review and regulate contraceptives so that a product with few side-effects is no longer considered safer if it has a high failure rate. According to the report, the "social and health risk of pregnancy will be important considerations for users and must be weighed in the calculation of the safety of methods." Thus, even if the new contraceptive drug or device presents a risk, if those risks are outweighed by the risks of pregnancy for some women—or if the new product offers a safety advantage for a particular group of users when compared to that group's actual contraceptive practice, including non-use—then the product should receive FDA approval! The committee is proposing that once a product receives FDA approval, the manufacturer automatically receives a certain immunity from their product's liability—unless they have withheld pertinent information from the FDA. In short, except for the Dalkon Shield, which was produced before FDA approval was stipulated, the scores of suits brought against manufacturers for physical injuries and permanent damage caused by their faulty contraceptive products or inattention to proper warning labels would collapse for the most part, because these products received FDA approval!

Once approval is granted, the report suggests the FDA use a "post-marketing surveillance system" to make an adequate assessment of a product's effect on users' health. Also, the committee hopes the FDA's product approval process for contraceptives will eventually be brought into line with the less stringent models used in Europe and the World Health Organization.

Besides the use of FDA approval as a limited defense in liability cases, another inducement the committee recommends is that Congress enact a uniform national products liability statute to nullify the 50 different state liability rules which now discourage manufacturers from promoting new products, which includes factoring the costs of an item's legal defense against its profits.

Finally, the Population Crisis Committee released its 1990 "Report on Progress Towards Population Stabilization" on Feb. 26, with a dire warning that in the decade ahead, nations can prevent the doubling of global population only if good birth control is universally available. PCC says worldwide birth control must be used by 75% of couples, and the average family size must decrease from four to two children. Governments and international groups must increase their annual spending for family planning from the current $3.2 billion a year to $10.5 billion.