



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 1, 2015

D.C.-area Abortion Clinic Tries to Put On a Happy Face

Carafem recently opened a new abortion clinic in Montgomery County, Maryland, that some have described as “spa-like.” The abortion provider is attempting to use slick ads and an unabashed approach to de-stigmatize abortion and portray the practice as normal. It provides a two-step abortion pill procedure (the first containing mifepristone and the second misoprostol) to women who are less than 10 weeks pregnant. It does not perform vacuum aspiration or surgical abortions.



What distinguishes Carafem from more established abortion providers such as Planned Parenthood is not its methods (Planned Parenthood also offers the abortion pill) but its attempt to “de-medicalize” and de-stigmatize abortion in the patients’ eyes. Historically trying to downplay its role as the nation’s largest abortion provider and emphasizing its contraception and STD-prevention services, Planned Parenthood has often couched its abortion services under euphemisms such as “reproductive healthcare.” It describes its facilities on its webpage as “health centers,” though the unborn babies who visited there might have disputed this description had they lived long enough to do so.

When the *Washington Post* interviewed Eric Ferrero, Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s vice president for communications, to get his take on Carafem’s approach, Ferrero summarized PPFA’s less in-your-face marketing approach:

We still do a lot of work with people who are less supportive of abortion, and one way we need to communicate is in a more empathetic framework that kind of says, “Look, these are really complicated personal issues.”

But, added Ferrero, as if to concede that Carafem’s approach had some merit, “we also need to be unapologetic and bold” to connect with young people.

Carafem sees no need even to affect subtlety, however. A series of ad posters that the company plans to place in Metro stations across the Washington, D.C. area will promote the killing of unborn babies as casually as supersizing an order of a Big Mac and fries: “Abortion. Yeah, we do that.”

“We don’t want to talk in hushed tones,” Carafem President Christopher Purdy was quoted as saying by the *Washington Post*. “We use the A-word.”

“We wanted to make the [abortion] experience one that was more caring and more kind,” Purdy told the *Huffington Post*. “Very professional, focused on the quality of care, the woman and her experience.”

Melissa Grant, a former Planned Parenthood director who is now Carafem’s vice president of health services, told *HuffPost* that her company hopes to “de-medicalize” abortion as much as possible, providing “non-judgmental and unapologetic care.”

HuffPost reported that Purdy and Grant have attempted “to eliminate some of the intimidating sights, noises, and smells of a traditional doctor’s office” and that “the abortion clinic will look no different



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from any other office.”

“It was important for us to try to present an upgraded, almost spa-like feel,” Grant told the *Washington Post*.

Though Carafem lists a downtown Washington address on its website, the *Post* reported that the clinic is located in Friendship Heights Village, Maryland, an affluent town that had a median home value in 2012 of over \$440,000 and median annual household income of almost \$95,000, indicating that the company’s marketing strategy is geared toward high-income demographics.

Carafem’s website is illustrated with pictures of fashionably dressed women reminiscent of advertising for major department store chains in women’s magazines such as *Vogue*. All of the models in the photos are smiling as though they are planning a fun-filled shopping excursion. A group of laughing, smiling women sitting around a restaurant table appear to be “doing lunch” between shopping for new outfits and getting an abortion. Purdy worked as a salesman for B. Altman & Co and Tommy Hilfiger as a young man, which might explain his propensity towards such slick advertising.

Ironically, from 1993 to 1996 Purdy worked for Save the Children, which note on its website, “We save children’s lives.” How Purdy went from saving the children to killing them over the course of 20 years is difficult to reconcile.

In 1996, Purdy went to work for DKT International. He became the company’s president & CEO in 2014 — a position he still holds. On his career summary on his LinkedIn profile, Purdy notes:

How do you get young people to think positively about using condoms?

What is the best way to provide women in rural Pakistan with family planning products and services?

How can we ensure that women have access to safe abortion products and services?

These are a sampling of questions I have asked myself since 1992 as I lived in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the USA, working primarily to increase access to and understanding and use of contraceptives, condoms, and safe abortion products and services. The answers to these and other curious questions have taken shape through the strategic leadership and broad direction of social marketing programs and social enterprises that improve lives.

However, many would dispute that the lives of the many babies aborted by these “safe” abortion products were “improved.”

Purdy goes on to brag:

Since 1989, DKT International has developed social marketing and franchising programs for family planning, safe abortion, and HIV prevention in 19 countries around the world....

DKT’s cost per CYP of less than \$2 in 2012 is the lowest of any major international family planning organization. DKT programs include a strong entrepreneurial component, with 70% of program expenses covered by sales revenue.

Let it not be said that Purdy has let something as trivial as respect for human life get in the way of sales revenue!

One may wonder what sort of conscienceless, callous individual would run an ad that says: “Abortion. Yeah, we do that.” One no longer needs to wonder.



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