



Contact:
Joerg Dreweke
(202) 296-4012 x4235
jdreweke@guttmacher.org

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A New Report by Life Dynamics Inc. Confirms Guttmacher Findings, Then Attempts to Move the Goalposts

Background

In the United States, abortion is a legal and constitutionally protected medical procedure—one which almost a third of U.S. women will have by age 45. [African American and Hispanic women have higher abortion rates](#) than white women because of their higher unintended pregnancy rates, which in turn reflect their lower access to and use of effective contraceptives, as well as significant health, social and economic inequities. Antiabortion activists, however, have routinely claimed (but never documented) that the higher abortion rates are the result of abortion providers “targeting” black women by mostly locating in predominantly black neighborhoods. In January 2011, Guttmacher investigated the claim and found it to be without merit: Only 9% of abortion providers are located in predominantly black neighborhoods, compared with 12% in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods and 63% in predominantly white neighborhoods.

In August 2011, Life Dynamics Inc., an antiabortion rights group, published a document titled “Racial Targeting and Population Control,” which purports to counter Guttmacher’s analysis. We offer the following points in response.

Life Dynamics confirms Guttmacher’s findings, then moves the goalposts

- The basic takeaway from the Life Dynamics report is that it confirms Guttmacher’s findings—abortion providers are overwhelmingly *not* located in predominantly African American or Hispanic neighborhoods.
- No longer able to support its previous talking point, Life Dynamics expansively redefines the meaning of “minority” neighborhoods to include any zip codes where the proportion of black or Hispanic residents is at least one-quarter higher than the state average. The new definition is so broad that even zip codes where only, for example, 10% of the population is African American or Hispanic suddenly qualify as minority neighborhoods, if that 10% is a quarter higher than the proportion in the state overall.
- That approach is taken to its ridiculous extreme in Idaho, where a provider in a zip code with a population that is only 0.5% African American is alleged to be “targeting” blacks, because 0.5% is one-quarter higher than the state average of 0.4%.
- The notion that abortion providers—or any health care providers, for that matter—can only be legitimately located in zip codes that closely mirror an entire state’s racial makeup is ludicrous.

The analysis contains several other serious errors and shortcomings

- Life Dynamics appears to be using an inconsistent definition of what constitutes an abortion provider. It considers all Planned Parenthood facilities as abortion providers—even those that only provide family planning services and do not perform abortions. But Life Dynamics’ analysis of abortion providers that are not affiliated with Planned Parenthood inexplicably seems to focus only on facilities that provide abortion services. (Ironically, the report criticizes Guttmacher’s study on the location of abortion providers as manipulative because “only facilities that actually perform abortions were included”.)
- Guttmacher’s January 2011 analysis included all abortion providers, not just those affiliated with Planned Parenthood (as Life Dynamics claims).
- Guttmacher’s analysis focused on those providers that perform at least 400 abortions annually, thereby omitting small providers such as physicians’ offices that might administer only a handful of medication abortions each year. However, including *all* abortion providers in the analysis yields very similar results (69% are located in predominantly white neighborhoods, 9% in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods and 7% in predominantly black neighborhoods).
- Lastly, the Guttmacher Institute is an independent, nonpartisan research and policy organization. It is not affiliated with—or the “research arm” of—Planned Parenthood Federation of America, as Life Dynamics falsely claims. (Also, Guttmacher dropped the “Alan” from its name in 2005 and is now simply known as the Guttmacher Institute).

For further context

[Claim that Most Abortion Clinics Are Located in Black Neighborhoods Is False](#)

[Abortion and Women of Color: The Bigger Picture](#)

[Health Disparities: More Context for Higher Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion Rates Among Women of Color](#)