

Abortion Lobby Lashes Out at Texas Nonprofit Group Providing Health Care to Low-Income Women

Criticism erupted when the state of Texas recently announced a \$1.6 million grant to a network of 27 medical providers affiliated with The Heidi Group—because founder Carol Everett has been a pro-life advocate. Now the abortion lobby, with an assist from mainstream media, has attempted to halt the grant.

Carol Everett, founder and CEO of The Heidi Group, has been on both sides of women's health issues. She used to serve as director of five abortion facilities; since founding The Heidi Group in 1995, her team has helped thousands of women in unplanned pregnancies make positive, life-affirming choices.

Today, The Heidi Group is one of Texas' largest health care networks for low-income women. Yet mainstream media, taking cues from the *Texas Tribune* funded by Planned Parenthood, has spread false allegations and misinformation since Texas announced its grant on August 10. Now Everett sets the record straight on what services The Heidi Group provides and its goals in receiving the Texas grant.

Bound4LIFE: In recent weeks The Heidi Group has received attention for providing services in a new state program, Healthy Texas Women. What is this program and how does it work?

Carol Everett: The Healthy Texas Women program helps women who are at 200 percent of the federal poverty level with annual physicals and necessary health care for one year.

The number of sick women we are seeing is staggering.

Estimates of 50,614 women will be seen and 8,947 in a secondary program. Our goal is to find a way to serve 100,000 Texas women with quality health care.

Bound4LIFE: Why have certain media outlets criticized The Heidi Group receiving a grant for this program, and what is your response?

Carol Everett: We are doing what needs to be done or the media wouldn't be targeting us. It never ceases to amaze me why the media is always looking for the negative side to every story and not listening to real experts in the field of women's health.

When asked what we offer, we respond that The Heidi Group offers quality health care in a respectful environment by medical professionals across Texas. The media's other agenda to discredit us is because Planned Parenthood wants to get the money we have been granted.

The media purports that Planned Parenthood is the only organization that can serve these women, but just look at what we're doing. For decades, low-income women have only been served in urban settings, not rural areas. The Heidi Group serves 70 counties, 41 of which are rural.

We will not be deterred, though, and will continue to reach out. For instance, the panhandle area of Texas has never been served before and medical professionals affiliated with The Heidi Group are now offering services there.

Bound4LIFE: Carol, for the benefit of those who may not know your background, please share how you became involved in the pro-life movement.

Carol Everett: After having my own abortion, I couldn't justify what I had done. But I found a way to soothe my conscience by selling abortions to women. I evolved in the abortion industry, first working for abortion clinics. I

quickly saw the profit and a way to make a lot of money.

I took the best abortionist I could find and opened our own abortion clinics. If we performed 40,000 abortions a year at \$25 commission per abortion, becoming a director over five clinics would make me a millionaire. It was all about the money.

In 1983, the Lord of life and God of the universe intervened and sent a godly man to share the gospel with me. One day I prayed the sinner's prayer with him, never expecting a change. By the time I returned to the clinic, I found everyone crying. I'm sure this had happened before, but I never saw it. One by one, I took the girls back to my office and talked them out of having abortions. Hours later, I fell to my knees and prayed a heart prayer asking God's forgiveness.

Within a few days, we were investigated by a local television station for selling abortions to women who weren't pregnant. It hit the national news. God got my attention and hit me with His two-by-four. I knew God had answered my prayer and was turning me in a different direction.

I never intended to become a pro-life activist, but in 1984 I started speaking and learning about the wonderful work the pro-life movement was doing. I continue to speak and work to save these precious lives.

Bound4LIFE: When was The Heidi Group founded, and how has it expanded since then?

Carol Everett: The Heidi Group was formed in 1995. We started in a small home—with me and two other people—but soon evolved to an office, helping pregnancy centers and women. Today, working closely with 27 medical providers across Texas, we have morphed into the well-women health care business.

Bound4LIFE: You were instrumental in the passage of Texas law HB 2, including the drama that unfolded in the Texas State

Capitol in 2013. Is there a single moment from the years-long HB 2 drama that stands out to you?

Carol Everett: So many moments during that time are memorable. It was breathtaking to walk into the Texas Capitol building and see God's people coming for the first time to support such important pro-life legislation. It was impossible not to cry.

That single moment was the most encouraging thing I've ever been a part of. I was never fearful, because the presence of our Lord was so strong. You could feel His presence.

Bound4LIFE: Now that the U.S. Supreme Court has struck down key components of the original law, do you see a way forward for the Texas Legislature?

Carol Everett: I believe that the Texas Legislature will be very careful about what they pass in the next session. The Legislature will probably be tweaking established law, but I do not anticipate they would walk away from supporting the pro-life issue.

Bound4LIFE: Many Christians nationwide have become involved in the movement to save lives in the womb. What is your perspective on the value of prayer as pro-life advocacy?

Carol Everett: Prayer passed HB 2 and prayer will pass future legislation. For so long, prayer was forgotten, as many relied on their own power instead of on God.

I so appreciate what Bound4LIFE and their supporters do in praying before the Supreme Court and what they will continue to do. This organization is an example for us all.

Bound4LIFE: In this critical election year, what do you foresee nationally for the pro-life cause?

Carol Everett: Of the two candidates running, we have one who wants to pay for abortions if elected president – and wants to expand abortions through the ninth month. Look at the evil in

that.

Every believer must stand up, vote, and pray as never before with humble and contrite hearts. Pro-life issues have almost been sidelined by the many other issues of immigration, jobs and national security. We are at a critical juncture with respect to the balance on the Supreme Court. The most important issue to me, first and foremost, is life. If we vote Scripture, we win and God wins.

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