



T E X A S
Women's Healthcare
COALITION

**Texas Health and Human Services Commission
Legislative Appropriations Request – FY 2018-2019
Testimony of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition
Janet Realini, MD, MPH
May 25, 2016**

On behalf of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition, thank you for this opportunity to provide input into the development of the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) for the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).

The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition (TWHC) and its 62 healthcare, faith, and community-based member organizations are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Texas women, babies, and families by ensuring access to preventive healthcare for all Texas women. Access to preventive and preconception care—including health screenings and contraception—leads to better birth spacing, greater access to prenatal care, and healthier babies.

Women's preventive care saves lives and money. Screening detects health problems early, before they cause complications and become more expensive to treat. For breast and cervical cancer, early treatment means a greater likelihood of cure; for diabetes and high blood pressure, early detection and management can prevent hospital admissions. Contraception, a vital part of preventive care, allows women and couples to plan and space their pregnancies, ensuring their babies have lower risk of prematurity and low birth weight.

Women's preventive healthcare is a sound investment. Medicaid pays for 53% of the state's births; in 2015, Medicaid paid over \$402 million for newborns with prematurity and low birth weight.¹ A healthy, full-term newborn birth costs the state about \$572, while a newborn born premature or with low birth-weight complications costs \$109,220

Unplanned Texas births cost \$1.34 billion annually.² Every dollar spent on contraceptive care leads to savings of over \$7.³

TWHC respectfully offers the following recommendations as you prepare the FY 2018-2019 Legislative Appropriations Request:

- 1. Ensure funding for women's preventive healthcare, including contraception, can fully meet the growing need among low-income uninsured women.** Nearly 1.8 million Texas women are in need of publicly funded preventive services, yet less than a quarter of these women currently receive the services they need.⁴ The state's women's health programs should provide at least as many women with family planning care as were served in State Fiscal Year 2010, taking into account population growth.
- 2. Identify areas with a shortage of qualified family planning providers and develop strategies to increase provider participation in the state's women's health programs.** Texas needs more providers to deliver preventive care to women, especially in rural areas. The launch of the state's new women's health programs – Healthy Texas Women and the Enhanced Family Planning Program – represents an opportunity to strengthen provider engagement throughout the state. To identify areas of greatest need, the state should collect and analyze data that provides an accurate picture of unduplicated provider capacity in the state.
- 3. Ensure the distribution of funding between the state's women's health programs matches the need within each program.** With new eligibility and benefit criteria under development, it is not yet clear what the enrollment and average cost of services will be for the Healthy Texas Women and Family Planning Programs. It is likely that a substantial increase from the current Family Planning funding allocation will be required to adequately serve eligible clients, particularly as many clients previously eligible for the Expanded Primary Health Care program may not be eligible for the HTW program. The state should have the flexibility to adjust the funding distribution between the programs as more data becomes available regarding the enrollment and needs within each program.
- 4. Increase access to the most effective forms of contraception – implants and intrauterine devices (IUDs).** These forms of contraception are twenty times more effective than other methods and considered the first-line choice for women by medical organizations, but their high upfront cost can be a barrier to providing them. One key strategy would be to regularly review and adjust payments for Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives purchased directly by physicians or clinics to ensure

women can obtain the devices during an office visit rather than returning later when the device is ordered from a specialty pharmacy.

5. **Maximize the ability of the women's healthcare safety net to reach more women and save Texas taxpayer dollars.** Developing a workable solution for the coverage gap will maximize federal funding and substantially increase the number of women able to access a medical home where they can receive critical preventive care and family planning services.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your strong support for women's preventive healthcare. If you have any questions or we can provide further information, please contact Janet Realini at JRealini@TexasWHC.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet P. Realini MD MPH". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Janet P. Realini, MD, MPH
Steering Committee Chair, Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition

Texas Women’s Healthcare Coalition Steering Committee Members

Texas Medical Association
 District XI (Texas) American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
 Texas Academy of Family Physicians
 Texas Association of Community Health Centers
 Methodist Healthcare Ministries
 Teaching Hospitals of Texas
 Texans Care for Children
 Center for Public Policy Priorities
 Healthy Futures of Texas

Texas Women’s Healthcare Coalition General Members

Access Esperanza Clinics Inc.	North Harris Montgomery Advanced Practice Nurse Society
Amistad Community Health Center	North Texas Alliance to Reduce Teen Pregnancy
Austin Advanced Practice Nurses	North Texas Nurse Practitioners
Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility	Panhandle Nurse Practitioner Association
AWHONN Texas	People’s Community Clinic
Brazos Valley Nurse Practitioner Association	Port Arthur Housing Authority
Cardea	SALVERE (Striving to Achieve Literacy via Education, Research, and Engagement)
Center for Community Health, UNTHSC	San Antonio Metro Health Clinic
Central Texas Nurse Practitioners	San Antonio Nurses in Advanced Practice
Children’s Hospital Association of Texas	Schneider Communications
Coalition for Nurses in Advanced Practice	South Plains Nurse Practitioner Association
Coastal Bend Advanced Practice Nurses	South Texas Family Planning & Health Corp.
Consortium of Texas Certified Nurse Midwives	Southeast Texas Nurse Practitioner Associates
Department of Ob/Gyn of UNTHSC and the ForHER Institute	St. David’s Foundation
El Paso Area Advanced Practice Nurse Association	Susan Wolfe and Associates
Fort Worth Region Nurse Practitioners	Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Gateway to Care	Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Good Neighbor Health Center	Texas Council on Family Violence
Healthy Futures Alliance	Texas Health Institute
Hill Country Advanced Practice Nurses & Physicians	Texas Hospital Association
Assistants Association	Texas Medical Association Alliance
Houston Area Chapter of NAPNAP	Texas Nurse Practitioners
Houston Area Nurse Practitioners	Texas Nurses Association
League of Women Voters of Texas	Texas Pediatric Society
Legacy Community Health Services	Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
National Council of Jewish Women—Texas State Policy	University Health System
Advocacy Network	Women’s & Men’s Health Services of the Coastal Bend, Inc.
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health	

¹ Lesley French and Evelyn Delgado. "Presentation to the House Committee on Public Health: Better Birth Outcomes." Health and Human Services Commission and Department of State Health Services. May 19, 2016.

² Sonfield, A., & Kost, K. "Public Costs from Unintended Pregnancies and the Role of Public Insurance Programs in Paying for Pregnancy and Infant Care: Estimates for 2008." New York, NY: Guttmacher Institute, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/public-costs-of-UP.pdf>.

³ Frost J, et al. *Return on Investment: A Fuller Assessment of the Benefits and Cost Savings of the US Publicly Funded Family Planning Program*. New York, Guttmacher Institute, 2014.

⁴ Frost J et al. "Contraceptive Needs and Services, 2013 Update." Guttmacher Institute. 2015.