



Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition 2021 Interim Charge Recommendations

The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition (TWHC) and its 87 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide recommendations for legislative interim charges. The following recommendations include legislative implementation monitoring and strategies to improve continuity of care for Texans, ensure access to contraceptive services, and support healthy outcomes for Texans. Access to preventive and preconception care – including health screenings and contraception – means healthy, planned pregnancies and early detection of cancers and other treatable conditions. In Texas, maternal death and pregnancy related complications remain a serious concern. Not only are Texas' high maternal deaths alarming, but pregnancy complications put mothers at risk for significant, ongoing health issues.

Through executing the below recommendations, TWHC hopes the legislature will build on the commitment it has shown to improving preventive women's health and maternal health in Texas.

Recommendation: Monitor the implementation of legislation passed by the 86th and 87th Legislature to improve women's and maternal health, including SB 750 and HB 133. In conducting this monitoring:

- Assess progress on a Section 1115 waiver to extend Medicaid for 6 months postpartum and review the implementation of the Healthy Texas Women Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver, including state efforts to reduce the impacts of HTW eligibility and application changes put in place as a result of the HTW 1115 waiver;
- Ensure the state's efforts to reverify clients' eligibility as the Public Health Emergency (PHE) ends, seamlessly connects women ineligible for Medicaid and CHIP to HTW and identify disenrollment issues within the system.
- Identify ways to maximize the ability of the women's healthcare safety net to reach more women and save Texas taxpayer dollars by studying the health status and outcomes for postpartum clients who have maintained comprehensive Medicaid coverage during the PHE.
- Review updates on HTW transition to managed care planning and inclusion of traditional family planning providers in planning process

Recommendation: Study the health benefits and potential cost-savings of identifying and removing barriers to contraceptive services and supply access. This could be achieved by:

- Enabling clients in the state to receive a one-year supply of birth control at a single pharmacy visit, if prescribed;
- Increasing Women's Health Programs providers' education and training on and ability to stock all FDA-approved methods of contraception, including long-acting reversible contraception (LARC);
- Identify and remove financial disincentives and other barriers to initiating LARC during the same visit the client first requests it;
- Analyze strategies to increase access to immediate postpartum LARC services in the hospital setting;
- Study the health outcomes and state fiscal implications associated with allowing contraceptive coverage in the CHIP program.
- Identify methods to improve continuity of care between CHIP Perinatal and the Family Planning Program (FPP). CHIP Perinatal clients were not included as a population to maintain coverage during the PHE, and too many women who deliver through CHIP Perinatal may be unaware that they qualify for FPP and lose access to any source of health care after their postpartum coverage ends. Strategies that increase postpartum enrollment into FPP are essential to the improvement of health outcomes for moms and babies and reducing costs in our state.

Recommendation: The need for affordable, consistent healthcare is critically important. Before the pandemic, 2019 census data showed Texas as the state with the highest number of uninsured residents with 5.2 million or 18.4 percent of Texans without insurance.¹ For the health and future of the state, Texas should increase awareness of all available healthcare options by:

- Examining ways to better integrate provider referral networks between publicly funded health programs and providers, including primary health, mental health, substance use, and oral health providers.
- Identifying opportunities to improve communication and efficiencies among Texas health programs and develop a more coordinated referral system across the state, county, and local resources.
- Identifying ways to use multiple points of contact – such as community health workers, health plans, or peer services – to increase awareness of and access to healthcare coverage options.

¹ Katherine Keisler-Starkey and Lisa N. Bunch U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports, P60-271, Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2019, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, DC, 2020.



TWHC represents various organizations providing direct healthcare, advocacy, or other community-based services across Texas. We are eager to work with you on these issues. We are happy to provide any additional information and welcome the opportunity to schedule follow up conversations on this or other topics relating to women's health - you can contact me at (210) 223-4589 or EDelgado@TexasWHC.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evelyn Delgado". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "E" and "D".

Evelyn Delgado
Chair, Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition