



## Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition

PROMOTING ACCESS TO PREVENTIVE  
HEALTHCARE FOR ALL TEXAS WOMEN

**House Human Services Committee  
Testimony of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition  
In Support of House Bill 136  
March 25, 2025**

The **Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition (TWHC)** appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony **in support of House Bill 136**, by Representative Lacey Hull.

The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition (TWHC) is a partnership of 77 healthcare, faith, and community-based member organizations dedicated to promoting access to preventative healthcare for women across the state. We strive to ensure the health and wellbeing of Texas women, their babies, and their families— as we believe that giving access to contraceptive services, postpartum care, health screenings, and so much more, will keep Texas families healthy and intact.

In line with our mission, we reaffirm our strong support for HB 136 — as it would improve support for breastfeeding by covering lactation services under Medicaid health insurance. There are numerous health benefits associated with breastfeeding for both mothers and babies.

Research shows breastfeeding reduces the risk of infections, respiratory illness, SIDS, and chronic disease in infants, while also lowering the mother's risk of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, postpartum depression, and breast and ovarian cancers. These health benefits translate into fewer emergency visits, hospitalizations, mortality rates and lower long-term healthcare costs.

National guidelines recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding through at least the first year of a child's life. Breastfeeding provides ideal nutrition and immune support for infants, while also strengthening the emotional bond between mother and baby— helping families grow healthy and connected from the very beginning. In Texas, about 83% of babies born in 2021 began breastfeeding, but only 54% were still breastfed at six months, and 23% were exclusively breastfed. Factors such as lack of postpartum support, latching difficulties, inadequate parental leave, and concerns about infant nutrition are key barriers that contribute to how long mothers breastfeed.

HB 136 helps address some of these challenges by expanding access to professional lactation support beyond a traditional office setting. Lactation consultants teach comfortable and effective breastfeeding positions, assess and address issues with low or oversupply of milk, create personalized feeding plans based on the baby's needs, educate on how to use a breast pump, address discomfort, offer support for mothers who are transitioning away from breastfeeding, provide reassurance, and build confidence during this sensitive and often overwhelming time for new mothers.



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Creating a separate provider type within Medicaid ensures these services are recognized, reimbursed, and available to all mothers, regardless of income or location. Streamlining enrollment and billing would increase the number of lactation consultants able to serve growing families—particularly in maternal health deserts. To truly thrive, families need strong support systems during the postpartum period—especially in the crucial first days when breastfeeding challenges are most common. Providing access to skilled lactation consultants through Medicaid is a key step toward supporting mothers across Texas and improving long-term health outcomes for mothers and their babies.

The TWHC is committed to supporting postpartum care for all Texas mothers and is glad to provide any additional information on this topic.

Respectfully,

Desiree Ingram  
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Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition