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Poll reveals Texans broadly support women's access to healthcare and state funding for programs

AUSTIN, TEXAS — Texans believe that access to family planning and birth control is important and should not be limited by a woman's income level, employer, or medical provider, according to results from a recent survey. Voters crossing broad demographic categories—political, racial, generational, and the religiously observant—support the right for women to make their own decisions about family planning and support state funding for family planning and birth control programs in the state.

“Family planning and birth control are the foundation of strong public health interventions to protect women from unplanned pregnancies, and these poll results are consistent with Texans' support for state funding for these important programs,” said Janet Realini, M.D., M.P.H., steering committee chair for the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition.

The survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and Chesapeake Beach Consulting for the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund found:

- 68 percent of respondents felt it is extremely or very important for Texas women to have access to family planning and birth control regardless of income barriers; and
- 73 percent of respondents favor providing state-funded family planning services including birth control for low-income women.

The women's healthcare safety net in Texas has been hit hard by severe funding cuts and a loss of providers to its essential programs. Lawmakers cut the Department of State Health Services Family Planning program by 66 percent, blocking access to preventive care that includes well-woman examinations, breast and cervical cancer screenings, and contraception for 147,000 low-income women.

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The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition supports the restoration of DSHS family planning funding to at least 2010-2011 levels and full funding for the Texas Women's Health Program. The survey reveals that more than half of respondents, or 54 percent, favor fully restoring these funds.

The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition advocates for:

- Adequate funding for state programs to provide access to preventive health care and birth control for low- and moderate-income women in Texas; and
- Policies that assure broad availability of providers in the Texas Women's Health Program and other state programs that provide health screenings, preconception assessment and counseling, contraception, and other preventive health care.

TWHC urges the Texas Legislature to invest in women's health and rebuild our women's health safety net to forestall a progression of undetected breast and cervical cancer, prevent complications of undetected diabetes and high blood pressure, reduce the occurrence of unplanned pregnancy, and improve the health of women and their families.

The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition is a coalition of organizations promoting access to preventive healthcare for all Texas women. TWHC is working toward the vision of a state where every woman has access to the preventive and preconception care that will help her stay healthy and prepare for healthy, planned pregnancies. For more information about TWHC, a list of coalition members, our mission, and our legislative priorities, visit www.TexasWHC.org.