



## **Texas Women's Health Care Policy Priorities 88th Legislative Session**

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. Access to preventive and preconception care – including contraception – means healthy, planned pregnancies and the early detection of cancers and other treatable conditions.

### **Fully fund women's health care safety net programs**

In Texas, three programs provide crucial preventive healthcare benefits such as contraception, well woman care and life-saving cancer screenings: Healthy Texas Women, the Family Planning Program, and the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening (BCCS) program. Statewide need for these programs has historically exceeded funding, especially in the Family Planning Program. The end of the Public Health Emergency will lead to an *additional hundreds of thousands* of Texas women seeking care. TWHC urges lawmakers to:

- Invest in the Family Planning Program to fill unmet needs across the state.
- Fully fund caseload growth for Healthy Texas Women and the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening program.
- Provide administrative support to help clients enroll in these programs, including sufficient eligibility FTEs within HHSC and grant funding to eligibility contractors within family planning clinics. Explore options to simplify program applications.

### **Ensure Texas women are able to access birth control**

Fiscally neutral policy changes can eliminate barriers to contraceptive access that put women at risk of unintended pregnancy:

- Add birth control as a fully covered benefit in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Texas is one of just two states in the nation that doesn't fund contraception in CHIP, and teens aged 13-19 who were enrolled in CHIP in Fiscal Year 2018, nearly 1,600 experienced a pregnancy by the next year.
- Ensure women can access a 12 month supply of contraception through insurance coverage, reducing the risk of missing pills.

### **Support healthy mothers and babies and prevent maternal mortality**

- Allow women to maintain Medicaid coverage for 12 months postpartum, utilizing the simplified State Plan Amendment Process.
- Support efforts to access and review data on maternal and infant health in a timely manner, to prevent the tragic loss of mothers and infants.