

Legislative Testimony

- [Senate Finance Committee Article II](#)
- [House Appropriations Article II Subcommittee](#)
- [House Public Health Committee - House Bill 279](#)
- [Senate Health and Human Services Committee - Senate Bill 790](#)
- [House Committee on Insurance - House Bill 1161](#)

Comments & Letters to State Officials

- [Letter to Texas Senate Finance Committee](#)
- [Letter to Budget Conference Committee Members](#)
- [Comments: HTW Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver Application](#)
- [Recommendations for Interim Charges](#)
- [Recommendations to Increase LARC Access](#)
- [HHSC Biennial Rate Review](#)
- [Letter to HHSC Regarding Cervical Cancer Factsheet](#)
- [Comments: New Federal Rules Threaten Birth Control Access](#)

Publications & Presentations

- [TWHC 85th Legislature Summary](#)
- [TWHC 85th Legislature Detailed Recap](#)
- [TWHC 85th Legislature Report Card](#)
- [White paper: New federal rules put contraceptive access at risk](#)
- [Press release: Response to veto of SB 790](#)
- [Op-ed: Reducing maternal mortality in Texas](#)
- [Legislative Briefing and Webinar](#)
- [Column: Addressing Texas' Maternal Mortality Crisis](#)

11 New Members

- Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.
- Community Healthcare Center
- El Buen Samaritano
- El Centro De Corazon
- Haven Health
- Pasadena Health Center
- Pregnancy and Postpartum Health Alliance of Texas
- Special Health Resources
- The SAFE Alliance
- The Women's Fund for Health Education and Resilience
- Valley AIDS Council



Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition: 2017 Year in Review

Legislative Successes and Missed Opportunities

In 2017, the TWHC [successfully advocated](#) for policies to increase access to women's preventive healthcare. Despite a tough budget climate, the Legislature funded the state's women's health programs at the same level as the previous biennium, representing a substantial victory. The Legislature also passed several [TWHC-supported bills and riders](#), including legislation to increase access to Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC), improve data collection on women's health programs, and study auto-enrollment into the Healthy Texas Women (HTW) program. Throughout the legislative session, the coalition [emphasized](#) the [critical role](#) that family planning plays in reducing maternal mortality risks and improving infant and maternal health outcomes.

There were also missed opportunities, such as Governor Abbott's veto of [Senate Bill 790](#), which would have extended the Women's Health Advisory Committee (WHAC). The Legislature also failed to pass a bill that would have [enabled women to receive](#) a 12-month supply of birth control. And much work remains to ensure that funding for family planning translates into high-quality contraceptive and preventive care, available to all Texas women. In 2018, the collaborative work of the TWHC will be more important than ever.

Federal and State Program Monitoring

A major development in 2017 was the state's application for a federal Medicaid 1115 Family Planning waiver to help fund the state's Healthy Texas Women (HTW) program. Though this waiver could bring in substantial federal funding, it also has the potential to significantly impact the family planning safety net.

During both the 85th Legislature and the waiver application process, the TWHC emphasized the importance of ensuring that services, eligibility, and quality of the state's women's health programs are not reduced, regardless of federal decisions. [Other key issues](#) the TWHC emphasized included ensuring a qualified network of family planning providers; protecting the Family Planning Program (FPP); improving enrollment and eligibility systems; and engaging stakeholders.

The TWHC has actively monitored federal developments that will impact Texas women, including potential changes to the Affordable Care Act and the federal Title X Family Planning program. In November, the TWHC created a [white paper](#) detailing the potential impact of two new federal rules that substantially expand the types of entities that can refuse to comply with the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive coverage requirement.

The TWHC will continue to track federal policies with the potential to impact health services in Texas. The coalition will also continue to urge the state to provide more frequent updates on the number of women receiving family planning services and the capacity of qualified family planning providers in the state.

Improving Contraceptive Access and Quality

The TWHC works to ensure that all Texas women have access to the full range of contraceptive methods, including the most effective methods: the implant and intrauterine device (IUD). These Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) methods are 20 times more effective than other methods, but are often difficult for women and providers to obtain. Legislation passed in 2017 requires HHSC to develop a 5-year strategic plan to increase access to LARC, and the TWHC will continue to [provide recommendations](#) for how the state can reduce barriers to these methods.

The TWHC regularly monitors program developments, agency updates, and rule changes that might impact Texas women's access to preventive healthcare. In 2017, the TWHC submitted [recommendations](#) regarding LARC rates, and [recommendations](#) for how HHSC can improve its outreach materials on cervical cancer. Members are also exploring the feasibility of collecting additional postpartum contraceptive measures in the state's Medicaid and CHIP programs.

Planning for the Legislative Interim

The interim leading up to the 86th Legislature will be an important time for the TWHC to work with members, stakeholders, and legislative offices to develop policy solutions to reduce barriers to family planning access. The TWHC submitted [interim charge recommendations](#) in September, aspects of which were incorporated into the final House and Senate interim charges. The TWHC will continue to work with legislative offices to develop policy solutions that prioritize access to family planning services.

Looking Ahead: Next Steps for the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition

- Engage Texas communities and educate the public – community engagement events across the state
- Monitor provider capacity, service provision, and quality of care
- Strengthen the Family Planning Program
- Track the progress of the state's 1115 Family Planning Waiver application
- Identify strategies for increasing access to LARC
- Study enrollment into the Family Planning Program and auto-enrollment into Healthy Texas Women
- Advocate against federal policies that harm Texas women

The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition (TWHC) and its 77 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 – including health screenings and contraception – for all Texas women.