



T E X A S
Women's Healthcare
COALITION

**House Higher Education Committee
House Bill 60
Testimony of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition
Leah Gonzalez
March 6, 2019**

The Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition (TWHC) and its 84 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 health screenings and contraception – means healthy, planned pregnancies and the early detection of cancers and other treatable conditions. When women are able to plan and space their pregnancies, mothers experience healthier outcomes and babies have less risk of prematurity and low birth weight.^{i ii} Overall, planned pregnancies have a healthier start, including earlier prenatal care, less alcohol and tobacco exposure, more folic acid to prevent birth defects, a greater likelihood of breastfeeding, and many positive outcomes for children.^{iii iv}

The state's women's health programs, Healthy Texas Women and the Family Planning Program, provide these important preventive and preconception care services to those without access to other forms of healthcare coverage. TWHC thanks our legislators for their commitment to women's preventive healthcare, and supports initiatives, such as HB 60, that increase continuity of care for women by eliminating barriers to preventive healthcare access.

Since the summer of 2016 launch of Healthy Texas Women and the Family Planning Program, there has been a steady increase of clients enrolled and served.^v However, these programs are still relatively new and need support, promotion, and clear guidance on how eligible clients can access them. In 2018, The TWHC hosted community engagement events throughout the state, and a lack of general knowledge about the programs was a common finding. With nearly 1.8 million Texas women in need of state-supported preventive health services,^{vi} Texas has a long way to go to provide vital care to those most in need.

Students without healthcare coverage may not know what they are eligible for. Additionally, students attending college away from home may not be aware of the local providers available to them.

Students are seeking higher education to prepare themselves for their future. In addition to attaining formal education, college is a time for students to take the lead and have real agency in their lives. Their health is no different.

Access to healthcare, especially women's health and family planning services, is critical for young people and those seeking higher education. Please show your support for Texans working toward achieving their educational and career goals and vote in favor of HB 60.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your strong support for women's preventive healthcare. If you have any questions or if we can provide further information, please contact me at (210) 223-4589 or LGonzalez@TexasWHC.org.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Evelyn Delgado
Chair, Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition

Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition Steering Committee Members

Texas Medical Association
District XI (Texas) American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Texas Association of Community Health Centers
Methodist Healthcare Ministries
Teaching Hospitals of Texas
Women's Health and Family Planning Association of Texas
Texans Care for Children
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Chair - Healthy Futures of Texas

Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition General Members

Access Esperanza Clinics Inc.
Amistad Community Health Center
Austin Advanced Practice Nurses
Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility
AWHONN Texas
Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.
Brazos Valley Nurse Practitioner Association
Cardea
Center for Community Health, UNTHSC
Centering Health Institute
Central Texas Nurse Practitioners
Children's Hospital Association of Texas
Coalition for Nurses in Advanced Practice
Coastal Bend Advanced Practice Nurses
Coastal Bend Wellness Foundation
Community Healthcare Center
Consortium of Texas Certified Nurse Midwives
Department of Ob/Gyn of UNTHSC and the ForHER
Institute
El Buen Samaritano
El Centro de Corazón
El Paso Area Advanced Practice Nurse Association
Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley
Fort Worth Region Nurse Practitioners
Haven Health
Hill Country Advanced Practice Nurses & Physicians
Assistants Association
Houston Area Chapter of NAPNAP
Houston Area Nurse Practitioners
League of Women Voters of Texas
Legacy Community Health Services
Lone Star Family Health Center
March of Dimes – Texas
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in
Women's Health
National Council of Jewish Women—Texas State
Policy Advocacy Network
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
North Harris Montgomery Advanced Practice Nurse
Society

North Texas Alliance to Reduce Teen Pregnancy
North Texas Nurse Practitioners
Panhandle Nurse Practitioner Association
Pasadena Health Center
People's Community Clinic
Port Arthur Housing Authority
Pregnancy and Postpartum Health Alliance of Texas
SALVERE (Striving to Achieve Literacy via
Education, Research, and Engagement)
San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
San Antonio Nurses in Advanced Practice
Schneider Communications
South Plains Nurse Practitioner Association
South Texas Family Planning & Health Corp.
Southeast Texas Nurse Practitioner Associates
Special Health Resources
St. David's Foundation
Susan Wolfe and Associates, LLC
Texas Association of Community Health Plans
Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Texas Council on Family Violence
Texas Health Institute
Texas Hospital Association
Texas Medical Association Alliance
Texas Nurse Practitioners
Texas Nurses Association
Texas Oral Health Coalition
Texas Pediatric Society
Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
Texas Women's Foundation
The Contraceptive Initiative
The SAFE Alliance
The Women's Fund for Health Education and
Resiliency
United Methodist Women
University Health System
Valley AIDS Council
Women's & Men's Health Services of the Coastal
Bend, Inc.
Young Invincibles

ⁱ Conde-Agudelo A, Rosas-Bermudez A, Kafury-Goeta AC. Birthspacing and risk of adverse perinatal outcomes: a meta-analysis. *JAMA* 2006; 295(15): 1809-1823.

ⁱⁱ Zhu BP. Effect of interpregnancy interval on birth outcomes: findings from three recent US studies. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 2005; 89(Supplement 1): S25-S33.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gipson JD, Koenig MA, Hindin MJ. The effects of unintended pregnancy on infant, child, and parental health: a review of the literature. *Studies in Family Planning* 2008; 39(1); 18-38.

^{iv} The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. Fast Facts: The consequences of unplanned pregnancy, May 2008. Accessed at <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/fast-facts-consequences-of-unplannedpregnancy.pdf>, January 12, 2013.

^v Health and Human Services Commission, "Texas Women's Health Program Report Fiscal Year 2017," May 2018, <https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/reports-presentations/2018/womens-health-program-savings-performance-report-may-2018.pdf>.

^{vi} Frost JJ et al., *Contraceptive Needs and Services, 2014 Update*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2016, <https://www.guttmacher.org/report/contraceptiveneeds-and-services-2014-update>.