



T E X A S  
Women's Healthcare  
COALITION

**House Public Health Committee**

**HB 800**

**Testimony of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition**

**Erika Ramirez**

**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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Representative Donna Howard's House Bill 800, which requires the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to cover contraceptives approved by the Food and Drug Administration. By improving access to preventive healthcare, which includes contraception, this bill will help eliminate barriers to healthcare, help reduce unintended pregnancies, and reduce costs for the state.

**Eliminating barriers to care and improving access**

Currently, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) does not provide coverage for contraception, which leaves young women on this program vulnerable to experiencing unintended pregnancy. The Healthy Texas Women program covers contraception for women ages 18-19 years old<sup>i</sup>, and women ages 15-17 years old with parental consent. However, a woman may not utilize both programs at the same time<sup>ii</sup> and would have to choose between the comprehensive healthcare of CHIP, or moving to Healthy Texas Women, a family planning program that covers contraceptives, but does not offer comprehensive healthcare.

Contraception is available to teens through the Family Planning Program and Title X clinics,

but funding is limited and there may not be a participating provider nearby. Additionally, navigating multiple programs acts as a barrier to access and puts the burden on the young woman and her family. HB 800 would address system limitations by making contraception available in CHIP and ensure young women receive all the preventive care they need.

### **Help reduce unintended and teen pregnancies**

In Texas, approximately half of all pregnancies are unplanned<sup>iii</sup>. 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.<sup>iv v</sup> 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.<sup>vi vii</sup> Eliminating barriers to contraception helps reduce unintended pregnancies.

Providing access to contraception through CHIP will especially help reduce the number of unintended teen pregnancies. In 2017, there were 26,971 teen births in Texas.<sup>viii</sup> About 70 percent of teen births belong to older teens ages 18-19.<sup>ix</sup> Research shows that an increase in contraceptive use does not foster an increase in sexual activity among teens.<sup>x</sup> Providing young women the ability to decide when to enter parenthood will help them access other opportunities such as higher education. The Healthy Futures Youth Advocacy Council (YAC) is comprised of teens from across Bexar County. These future advocates provided personal stories during our YAC Advocacy Day at the Capitol just a few weeks ago. Students shared why access to contraception is so important to them and their peers.

### **Access to preventive care reduces state costs**

Investing in family planning ultimately leads to cost savings for the state. Preventive care and birth control are as important to the state's fiscal health as they are to the health of women and their babies. Every dollar used to provide contraceptive care for a woman saves \$7.09 in public costs.<sup>xi</sup> Providing preventive services to low-income women reduces costs primarily by helping women avoid unplanned pregnancy, which in turn averts Medicaid costs associated with pregnancy, birth, and infant healthcare. Medicaid pays for 53 percent of the births in Texas, resulting in the state spending \$3.5 billion per year for birth and delivery-related services for mothers and infants in the first year of life.<sup>xii</sup>

Access to healthcare, especially women's health and family planning services, is critical for all Texas women, including teens. Please show your support for Texans being able to access all the preventive care they need and vote in favor of HB 800.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or if we can provide further information, please contact me at (210) 223-4589 or ERamirez@TexasWHC.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Delgado

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

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.	North Texas Alliance to Reduce Teen Pregnancy
Amistad Community Health Center	North Texas Nurse Practitioners
Austin Advanced Practice Nurses	Panhandle Nurse Practitioner Association
Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility	Pasadena Health Center
AWHONN Texas	People's Community Clinic
Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.	Port Arthur Housing Authority
Brazos Valley Nurse Practitioner Association	Pregnancy and Postpartum Health Alliance of Texas
Cardea	SALVERE (Striving to Achieve Literacy via
Center for Community Health, UNTHSC	Education, Research, and Engagement)
Centering Health Institute	San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
Central Texas Nurse Practitioners	San Antonio Nurses in Advanced Practice
Children's Hospital Association of Texas	Schneider Communications
Coalition for Nurses in Advanced Practice	South Plains Nurse Practitioner Association
Coastal Bend Advanced Practice Nurses	South Texas Family Planning & Health Corp.
Coastal Bend Wellness Foundation	Southeast Texas Nurse Practitioner Associates
Community Healthcare Center	Special Health Resources
Consortium of Texas Certified Nurse Midwives	St. David's Foundation
Department of Ob/Gyn of UNTHSC and the ForHER	Susan Wolfe and Associates, LLC
Institute	Texas Association of Community Health Plans
El Buen Samaritano	Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
El Centro de Corazón	Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
El Paso Area Advanced Practice Nurse Association	Texas Council on Family Violence
Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley	Texas Health Institute
Fort Worth Region Nurse Practitioners	Texas Hospital Association
Haven Health	Texas Medical Association Alliance
Hill Country Advanced Practice Nurses & Physicians	Texas Nurse Practitioners
Assistants Association	Texas Nurses Association
Houston Area Chapter of NAPNAP	Texas Oral Health Coalition
Houston Area Nurse Practitioners	Texas Pediatric Society
League of Women Voters of Texas	Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
Legacy Community Health Services	Texas Women's Foundation
Lone Star Family Health Center	The Contraceptive Initiative
March of Dimes – Texas	The SAFE Alliance
Mental Health America of Greater Houston	The Women's Fund for Health Education and
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in	Resiliency
Women's Health	United Methodist Women
National Council of Jewish Women—Texas State	University Health System
Policy Advocacy Network	Valley AIDS Council
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health	Women's & Men's Health Services of the Coastal
North Harris Montgomery Advanced Practice Nurse	Bend, Inc.
Society	Young Invincibles

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<sup>i</sup> Texas Health and Human Services. Who Can Apply. <https://www.healthytexaswomen.org/htw-program#who-can-apply>

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> Kost K, Maddow-Zimet I and Kochhar S, Pregnancy Desires and Pregnancies at the State Level: Estimates for 2014, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2018, <https://www.guttmacher.org/report/pregnancy-desires-andpregnancies-state-level-estimates-2014>

<sup>iv</sup> 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.

<sup>v</sup> 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.

<sup>vi</sup> 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.

<sup>vii</sup> 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.

<sup>viii</sup> Power to Decide. State Facts. <https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/national-state-data/texas>

<sup>ix</sup> United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics, Natality public-use data 2007-2017, on CDC WONDER Online Database, October 2018. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/natalitycurrent.html>

<sup>x</sup> Lindberg, Laura et al. Understanding the Decline in Adolescent Fertility in the United States, 2007–2012. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Volume 59, Issue 5, 577 – 58.

<sup>xi</sup> Frost JJ, Sonfield A, Zolna MR and Finer LB, Return on investment: a fuller assessment of the benefits and cost savings of the US publicly funded family planning program, *Milbank Quarterly*, 2014, doi: 10.1111/1468-0009.12080, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/enhanced/doi/10.1111/1468-0009.12080/>, August 12, 2016.

<sup>xiii</sup> French, Lesley and Delgado, Evelyn, “Presentation to the House Committee on Public Health: Better Birth Outcomes,” Health and Human Services Commission, May 19, 2016.