FY 2020-2021 Legislative Appropriations Request Recommendations
Texas Women’s Healthcare Coalition
April 23, 2018

Thank you for this opportunity to provide recommendations for HHSC’s Legislative Appropriations Request. The Texas Women’s Healthcare Coalition (TWHC) and its 78 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 early detection of cancers and other treatable conditions.

The TWHC commends HHSC’s efforts around maintaining funding for the state’s women’s health and family planning programs during the last legislative appropriations process for the 85th legislative session. In such a tight budget year, the appropriation of level funding for the state’s women’s health programs represented a major victory.

However, there is still more work to be done. Texas women face high maternal mortality rates with Black women facing the highest risk. Mothers with substance use disorder are also at higher risk as drug overdose is the second leading cause of maternal death\(^1\). Given these major challenges facing Texas women and the programs that serve them, it is more important now than ever that Texas prioritize women’s preventive healthcare access.

Included below are the TWHC’s LAR recommendations:

1. **Continued investment in women’s preventive healthcare is critical, particularly as the state’s new programs stabilize and continue working to enroll more providers and clients alike.** The TWHC strongly encourages HHSC to request increased funding for women’s health services programs in the base budget for 2020-2021. Stability in our state’s programs is essential if Texas hopes to strengthen its family planning network and reach more of the nearly 1.8 million Texas women in need of basic preventive services\(^{ii}\).

2. **The TWHC strongly supports providing additional funding for the HHSC Family Planning Program (FPP).** The Family Planning program plays a crucial role in the state and demand for family planning services remains high. Many FPP contractors report that they ran out of funds early in the last fiscal year. The TWHC
supports requesting increased funding for the FPP to ensure that women depending on this program have access to services all year. Also, now that all women's health programs are in the same budget strategy, it is highly recommended that funding be allocated to programs based on need and demand.

3. **Investing to improve services to women by increasing access to the most effective, long-lasting forms of contraception (implants and intrauterine devices) can be helpful in saving costs long-term.** Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) such as implants and IUDs are twenty times more effective than other methods, and are considered a first-line option for women by medical organizations. However, their high upfront cost can be a barrier to providing them. The state has already taken important steps to increase access to LARCs, but more can be done:
   - Increase provider training and education on long acting reversible contraception, including training that specifically targets immediate postpartum insertion of LARCs;
   - Increase outreach to educate Texas women about LARCs;
   - Regularly review and adjust payments for LARCs purchased directly by physicians or clinics to ensure women can obtain the device during an office visit rather than returning later when the device is ordered from a specialty pharmacy;
   - Set aside LARC specific funds for providers unable to stock LARCs on hand due to cost;
   - Enable CHIP Perinate to cover immediate postpartum insertion of LARCs.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your support for women’s preventive healthcare. If you have any questions or we can provide further information, please contact me at JRealini@TexasWHC.org.

Respectfully,

Janet P. Realini, MD, MPH
Steering Committee 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
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
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
Gateway to Care
Good Neighbor Health Center
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
March of Dimes - Texas
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
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
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 Pediatric Society
Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
The Contraceptive Initiative
The SAFE Alliance
The Women’s Fund for Health Education and Resiliency
University Health System
Valley AIDS Council
Women’s & Men’s Health Services of the Coastal Bend, Inc.
Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Texas Department of State Health Services, Joint Biennial Report As Required by Chapter 34, Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 34.015, July, 2016.