

# One Voice Texas

## A Collaborative for Health & Human Services



### Healthcare: Women's Health

#### Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: December 13, 2012

##### Issue/Concern:

During the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, funding for women's health services was cut by two-thirds (\$111M to \$38M over biennium). These services included disease screenings and birth control. Additionally, the legislature restricted organizations' participation in the Medicaid waiver program, resulting in non-renewal of the waiver by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (this issue is currently going through the courts and the waiver remains in place).

As a result of these cuts, clinics have closed and or lost up to 75% of their budgets and the number of patients who can be served has dropped from 212,000/year to 61,000/year. Access to the most effective contraceptive methods have been restricted because of higher up-front costs. Many organizations have implemented or expanded systems that require clients to pay for services if they do not qualify for public support, making healthcare out of reach for some of the poorest women.

While the purpose of some of these legislative actions was focused on limiting access to abortion – in spite of the fact that federal and state funds cannot be used in this way – these policies have limited women's access to critical healthcare including prevention and chronic disease services.

##### Specific Policy Recommendation(s):

- Support the continued transformation of Medicaid in Texas into a system that provides quality, coordinated and cost-effective care to those most in need, while expanding Medicaid eligibility to low-income Texans currently served by safety net programs that are funded solely at the county and state levels without federal support.
- Continue to support the 1115 Transformation Waiver process initiatives developed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission that maximize Medicaid federal matching funds.
- Build upon the performance improvements of 2010 in Medicaid and CHIP eligibility systems to fully eliminate delays, backlogs, and erroneous denials by assuring staffing levels, technical resources and processes are designed to meet or exceed federal processing standards.
- Improve access to care for Medicaid beneficiaries by ensuring that reimbursement rates are adequate to cover the costs of providing care.

##### How Will This Impact State Funding? What Can Be Accomplished?

Four fundamental principles drive public funding for family planning. First, unintended pregnancy is associated with negative health consequences which increases the need for healthcare services. Second, planning their families enables women to attain their educational and career goals and families to provide for their children. Third, governments realize substantial cost savings by investing in family planning, which reduces the rate of unintended pregnancies and the costs of prenatal, delivery, postpartum, and infant care. Fourth, all Americans have the right to choose the timing and number of their children. (These principles led to the bipartisan passage of Title X in 1970 and later to other federal- and state-funded programs supporting family planning services for low-income women.)

This legislation is resulting in the dismantling of our state's safety net and poses devastating consequences – financial and social. Texas has the highest rate of uninsured women in the nation – 1 in every 4 is without health coverage. Uninsured women are more likely to have inadequate access to care, get a lower standard of care when they are in the health system, and have poorer health outcomes. They are more likely to postpone care and to forgo filling prescriptions than their insured counterparts and often delay or skip important preventive care.

**Supporting Facts/Research Resources:**

The New England Journal of Medicine, Kari White, Ph.D., Daniel Grossman, M.D., Kristine Hopkins, Ph.D., Joseph Potter, Ph.D., September 27, 2012

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