



T E X A S
Women's Healthcare
COALITION

House State Affairs Committee
Testimony of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition in favor of H.B. 755
Janet Realini, MD, MPH
March 13, 2013

Good afternoon, Chairman Cook and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition (TWHC), which is comprised of 38 healthcare, public policy, and faith-based organizations. The coalition's mission is to improve the health and well-being of Texas women, babies, and families by ensuring access to preventive care for all Texas women.

My name is Janet Realini, MD, MPH, and I serve as chair of the coalition. I am a family physician from San Antonio and serve as president of the nonprofit organization Healthy Futures of Texas.

The TWHC strongly supports H.B. 755.

The member organizations of the TWHC are alarmed by the damage to the women's healthcare "safety net" that occurred as a result of the 2011 budget cuts to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Family Planning program. These deep cuts, along with the system of prioritization of funding enacted through S.B. 7 in the first called session of 2011, have had profound effects on access to women's preventive care in the state, and it is essential that we understand the full impact of these measures.

H.B. 755 would provide for a study to better understand the effects of the 2011 policy change. By requiring HHSC to examine unintended birth rates, H.B. 755 would focus attention on one of the most important public health consequences of loss of access to contraception and other preventive care.

Unintended pregnancies are exceedingly common in Texas, accounting for 46% of births between 2002 and 2010.¹ Nearly 74 percent of unintended births are publicly funded in Texas.² Unplanned pregnancies carry higher risks for prematurity and low birth weight, late prenatal care, and exposure to alcohol and tobacco. Planned and well-spaced pregnancies allow women and their families to achieve their economic and educational goals, as well.

The DSHS program was cut by two-thirds — \$73 million — reducing the number of clients served by the DSHS Family Planning program from 211,980 in FY 2010 to an estimated 65,000 in FY 2013, a reduction of 146,980 Texans. At least 53 clinics closed, and two-thirds (66%) of these had no affiliation with Planned Parenthood. Other clinics have reduced their hours and restricted access to the most effective contraceptive methods. A wide range of publicly supported health clinics, including federally qualified health centers, urban hospital districts, local health departments, and academic medical centers, had funds dramatically reduced or eliminated.

¹ Kingsley R, et al. Preconception Health Indicators among Women—Texas 2002-2010. MMWR 2012; 61(29):550-555.

² Sonfield A, et al. The Public Costs of Births Resulting from Unintended Pregnancies: National and State-Level Estimates. Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health 2011; 43(2): 94-102.

Women's preventive care includes well-woman examinations; screening for breast and cervical cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, family violence, and sexually transmitted infections; and counseling and provision of a contraceptive method (not abortion).

Women's preventive care saves money as well as lives. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) estimates that the cuts to the DSHS Family Planning program have increased the state's Medicaid costs by \$33 million this fiscal year. An additional 23,760 Medicaid-funded births are expected in 2014-15, which in turn will cost the state an additional \$103 million in Medicaid costs alone (\$273 million in all funds).

H.B. 755 would provide essential additional information to ensure that Texas has the best information possible to guide its preventive care programs for low-income women.

Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition Membership

as of March 13, 2013

Texas Medical Association*	Susan Wolfe and Associates
Texas Medical Association Alliance	Family Health Care, Inc.
District XI (Texas) American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*	Healthy Futures of Texas*
Texas Academy of Family Physicians*	Healthy Futures Alliance
Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists	Texas Health Institute
Texas Pediatric Society	Cardea
Texas Hospital Association	Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility
Texas Nurses Association	Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
Methodist Healthcare Ministries*	Center for Community Health, UNTHSC
Texas Association of Community Health Centers*	Gateway to Care
Children's Hospital Association of Texas	Consortium of Texas Certified Nurse Midwives
Texans Care for Children	Teaching Hospitals of Texas*
Center for Public Policy Priorities*	University Health System
Department of Ob/Gyn of UNTHSC and the ForHER Institute	San Antonio Metro Health Clinic
National Council of Jewish Women—Texas State Policy Advocacy Network	South Texas Family Planning and Health Corp
Women's Health and Family Planning Association of Texas*	Texas Council on Family Violence
	People's Community Clinic
	St. David's Foundation
	Coalition of Nurses in Advance Practice
	League of Women Voters of Texas
	Texas Nurse Practitioners
	AWHONN Texas

*Steering Committee Members