



Dear Texan,

Sometimes it's hard to realize how decisions made at the Texas state capitol affect our daily lives and the healthcare and social services we are able to access. One thing we all should remember is that

**Texas lawmakers hold the key to women's health services in our communities –
and we have to tell them what we need!**

While some lawmakers choose to focus only on the most controversial aspects of women's reproductive health (mandatory HPV vaccines, abortion services, etc.), we know there are many, many other health challenges that Texas women face every day. Here are some things you should know about women's health in Texas:

- Texas has the nation's highest rate of women aged 15-44 with no health insurance¹
- Texas has a lower rate of women who have access to prenatal care or family planning than almost every other state in the nation²
- African-American and Latina women have the highest death rates from cervical cancer (mortality is even higher for Latina women along the Texas-Mexico border)³
- Half of all Texas women giving birth rely on Medicaid to cover their child's birth⁴
- Texas is one of the ten states with the highest percentage of women over 40 who have not gotten a mammogram in the past three years;⁵
- Texas has the nation's highest rate of teenage births and repeat teenage births⁶

We cannot let these numbers define women's health any more! We will soon have the opportunity to address women's reproductive health needs in Texas during the 2009 legislative session – where lawmakers hold the key to women's health services. In preparation, we are asking women across Texas to share what they and their families need with us so we can share these stories with Texas legislators. Given the real needs of Texas women and families, we hope our legislators will start focusing on delivering these commonsense, common-ground services to the sisters, mothers and daughters of Texas!

Sincerely,

The *Healthy Women, Healthy Families* Coalition

¹ *The Status of Women in Texas, 2004: Highlights*. Ed. Amy Caiazza, Dr. and April Shaw. The Status of Women in the States (2004) R297. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Nov. 2004. 26 Feb. 2008. http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/TX_R297.pdf

² *Contraception Counts: Texas*. Guttmacher Institute, March 2006. Accessed 21 Apr. 2008. http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/state_data/states/texas.pdf
Adequacy of Prenatal Care Summary (2007 Ranks). America's Health Rankings. United Health Foundation. 26 Feb. 2008
<http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/ahr2007/prenatal.html#Table32>

³ *Barriers and Facilitators of Cervical Cancer Screening Among Hispanic Women*. Byrd, Chavez, Wilson. *Ethnicity & Disease*, Vol. 17, 2007

⁴ *Texas: Births Financed by Medicaid as a Percent of Total Births, 2002*. StateHealthFacts.org. Kaiser Family Foundation. Accessed 21 Apr. 2008.
<http://statehealthfacts.kff.org/profileind.jsp?ind=223&cat=4&rgn=45>

⁵ *Mammogram Rate for Women 40+, 2006*. StateHealthFacts.org. Kaiser Family Foundation. Accessed 22 Apr. 2008.
<http://statehealthfacts.kff.org/comparemaptable.jsp?ind=479&cat=10>

⁶ *Teen births, by Age Group*. KIDS COUNT Data Center. Annie E. Casey Foundation. Accessed 21 Apr. 2008. <http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter/profile.jsp>
Jayson, Sharon. *Repeat teen births highest in Texas at 24%*. USA Today 24 Oct. 2007. Accessed 21 Apr. 2008. http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2007-10-24-repeat-teen-births_N.htm



Which of the following healthcare services are needed where you live? We will bring your answers to Texas lawmakers so they know what changes we need in our communities!

| Which of these healthcare services are needed where you live? Your zip code or county _____ | 1 Urgently needed | 2 Much needed | 3 Some- what needed | 4 Don't know/ No opinion |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| GENERAL HEALTH | | | | |
| 1) Healthcare services for women and families with no (or limited) health insurance | | | | |
| 2) Transportation to clinics or social service offices | | | | |
| 3) Healthcare providers who understand the culture of the patient (including sexual orientation, gender expression/identity, etc.) | | | | |
| 4) Healthcare services in the language of the patient (Spanish, Vietnamese, American Sign Language, etc.) | | | | |
| 5) Healthcare services without burdensome restrictions such as I.D. requirements | | | | |
| 6) Affordable, community-based long-term and preventive healthcare for elderly and disabled women and their families | | | | |
| 7) Healthcare services for women and families within the criminal justice system (prison, probation, detention, etc.) | | | | |
| FAMILY PLANNING | | | | |
| 8) Medically accurate and comprehensive sex education | | | | |
| 9) Affordable, available family planning options (birth control, pregnancy testing, flexible education options for teen parents) for women and teens | | | | |
| 10) Services for women and their partners who want to have a child (pre-natal care/vitamins, maternity leave, infertility treatments, artificial insemination, sperm donors, adoption services, etc.) | | | | |
| 11) Getting time off work for doctor's appointments or birth of a child | | | | |
| 12) Safe, affordable child care for families | | | | |
| 13) Sterilization or other long-term birth control available without coercion, pressure, or judgment | | | | |
| DIAGNOSTIC AND OTHER SERVICES | | | | |
| 14) HIV testing, treatment, and support resources | | | | |
| 15) Testing, treatment, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (Chlamydia, herpes, etc.) | | | | |
| 16) Screening, diagnosis and treatment for breast and cervical cancer, and other long-term reproductive conditions such as endometriosis | | | | |
| 17) Safe, affordable abortion services | | | | |
| 18) Appropriate and respectful emergency and follow-up healthcare for survivors of sexual abuse, assault or rape | | | | |
| 19) Education about how pollution (smog, chemicals in the home/workplace, etc.) impacts reproductive and general health | | | | |
| 20) Healthcare services for women going through menopause (hormone treatments, counseling, etc.) | | | | |
| Other _____ | | | | |



Some examples of personal stories:

I missed my doctor's appointment because I don't have a car and the only clinic in the county is too far away. We need rural mobile clinics out here for people like me who don't have transportation...

When I got sex ed in my high school, all they said was that we had a "gift" that we shouldn't give away before marriage. They also told us that condoms don't work. Now my friends are having sex without condoms and I'm scared they're going to get AIDS or STD's – not to mention getting pregnant. We need to be told the truth about how to stay safe and healthy...

My husband's job doesn't give us health insurance. When we think about having a baby, I get really worried about how much it will cost. How are we supposed to have a healthy baby with no insurance?...

I have a hard time walking because of arthritis and I just can't afford the medicines that help me control the pain. On top of that, my partner got injured on the job and can hardly walk so I have to take care of both of us, plus the house, plus the kids. I just can't do it all...

★OPTIONAL: Share Your Contact Information

If you share your information, we'll keep you updated about health changes in your community, tell you what Texas lawmakers are doing about the issues that matter to you, and more. This information will be kept private by the *Healthy Women, Healthy Families* coalition UNLESS you want to receive a response from your lawmakers.

- YES, please share this information with my lawmakers so they can send me a response!
- NO THANKS, this is just for the *HWHF* coalition

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____, TX Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ - _____ E-mail _____

-----**NOTE: The following information will be kept separate from your survey and will never be associated with your name.**-----

Healthy Women, Healthy Families is committed to telling the stories of women and families from diverse communities across Texas. We encourage you to share the following information about yourself to help us make sure we are achieving this goal:

Age: _____ Sex/Gender: _____ Race/Ethnicity: _____

Annual Household Income: Under \$25,000 \$25,000 - \$49,999 \$50,000 - \$74,999 \$75,000+