



## WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE SAFETY NET

LWV Texas urges the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislature to continue to rebuild and augment the women's healthcare safety net in Texas. Our priorities include:

- **Ensure funding for women's preventive healthcare, including contraception, to fully meet the need among low-income, uninsured women.**  
Texas should ensure the distribution of funding between the various women's health programs matches the need within each program. Although the state has applied for federal funds to support the HTW (Healthy Texas Women) program, legislators must keep women's health a priority as the network of providers is being rebuilt.
- **Identify areas with a shortage of qualified family planning providers and develop strategies to increase provider participation in the state's women's health programs.**  
Texas needs more providers to deliver preventive care to women, especially in rural areas. The women's healthcare safety net is still recovering from cuts to family planning programs in 2011 and the exclusion of some of the state's largest providers, such as Planned Parenthood.
- **Ensure women have access to the full range of FDA-approved contraceptives of their choice, including the most effective forms of contraception – implants and intrauterine devices (IUDs).**  
Ensuring women have access to the most effective form of contraception that works for them is key to enabling women to plan and space their pregnancies. All FDA-approved birth control methods should be accessible, including Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC), as well as implants and IUDs.
- **Increase continuity of care for women by eliminating barriers to preventive healthcare access.** When women experience gaps in their healthcare coverage, it increases their risk for negative health outcomes and unintended pregnancy. Enabling eligible women to access and maintain continuous healthcare coverage improves outcomes and reduces costs to the state. Expanding Medicaid coverage to include one-year postpartum would serve this purpose.
- **Maximize the ability of the women's healthcare safety net to reach more women and save Texas taxpayer dollars.**  
54% of the state's unplanned births are publicly funded, and most recent research shows that unintended pregnancies in Texas cost taxpayers \$2.9 billion. For every dollar invested in contraception, taxpayers see a return of \$7.09.

*Louise Hytken, LWVTX Women's Health/Reproductive Choice Issue Chair*