



Texas Community Health Centers

Protect the women's health care safety net by crafting a consolidated women's health program that works for patients and providers.

Across the state, more than half of health center patients are female. **In 2013, Texas health centers cared for 690,218 women, of whom 317,132 were of childbearing age.**

Health centers are active participants in numerous programs providing primary care to uninsured Texans, including the Texas Women's Health Program (TWHP), the Expanded Primary Health Care (EPHC) Program and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Family Planning Program. **Health centers make up the majority of contracted providers in the EPHC and DSHS Family Planning programs.**

In state fiscal year 2014, health centers served as:

59 percent of the contractors in EPHC

72 percent of the contractors in DSHS Family Planning

In December, the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission adopted recommendations to consolidate the TWHP and EPHC into a single program. While this presents an opportunity for lawmakers to create an improved program, **the consolidated program must be crafted to ensure access to care through a robust provider network.** Below are critical elements of a successful consolidated program and continued health center participation.

Reimbursement: Health centers are reimbursed under an encounter methodology in the TWHP, where they are paid the same all-inclusive rate for any eligible TWHP patient visit. This methodology takes into account the enhanced client services health centers provide and is also used for health centers payments in Medicaid, Medicare and CHIP. **Health centers urge lawmakers to utilize this encounter-based methodology for health center reimbursement in the consolidated women's health program.**

Comprehensive Care: Health centers provide comprehensive care. Providing access to comprehensive primary and preventive care keeps Texas women healthy and leads to healthy Texas babies. **Health centers urge lawmakers to design a benefit package that includes comprehensive primary care, similar to the existing EPHC program.**

Meaningful Stakeholder Input: Health centers have years of experience participating in various women's health and primary care programs and can provide invaluable input to help ensure that the consolidated program works efficiently for both patients and providers. **Health centers urge lawmakers to require meaningful provider input before and during the design of the consolidated program and throughout the agency implementation process.**

Texas Association of Community Health Centers