



February 21, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Huffman, Vice Chair Hinojosa, and Committee Members,

We are submitting this written testimony in support of SB (Senate Bill) 1, specifically the increases in the women's health programs in D.1.1. We are excited and encouraged to see these major investments in the lives and futures of Texas women.

Every Body Texas is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that every person in Texas can access safe, unbiased, high-quality sexual and reproductive healthcare. As the statewide Title X Family Planning Program grantee for Texas, Every Body Texas funds a diverse network of over 30 agencies—including federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), public health departments, hospital-based clinics, and free-standing family planning clinics—that serve nearly 200,000 clients at more than 150 service sites throughout Texas.

We thank Chair Huffman and the Lt. Governor for their support in fully funding the women's health programs included in this budget. These funding increases represent life-saving care for Texas moms and their families and show that keeping moms and babies healthy is a core Texas value.

Healthy Texas Women, Healthy Texas Women Plus, the Family Planning Program, and the Breast and Cervical Cancer Services together represent an important safety net for Texas families. We know that when women can plan and space their pregnancies, moms have better birth outcomes and babies are at lower risk of prematurity and low birth weight. These programs offer high-quality prenatal care, cancer screening services, postpartum mental healthcare, sexually transmitted infections testing and treatment, and contraceptive care to uninsured Texans so that they can keep themselves—and their families—healthy. Clients of these programs are young women in college, new moms, community leaders, business owners, and everyone in between.

We are particularly heartened to see the funding increases in the Family Planning Program. This program has been underfunded for years; forcing providers to carry over hundreds of thousands of dollars in unpaid claims each year. The funding increase in SB 1 means that our important safety net providers will no longer have to carry the burden of unpaid claims, but it also means that they can serve more Texans in need. Only 1 in 4 Texas counties have a Family Planning Program provider; The additional funds in SB 1 will fully fund client caseloads at those clinics and lay the groundwork for expanding services for residents across the state.

We join our colleagues in the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition in our appreciation of the investments this committee is making on behalf of Texas women. We would also like to use this opportunity to suggest a few small ways in which the legislature can begin to expand access to reproductive healthcare in more rural, underserved parts of the state.



In addition to the full funding of the family planning program, mobile contraception piloted in the Rio Grande Valley have proven to be an effective way to increase rural healthcare access. We understand that one of these units is funded in this budget but would encourage this committee to fund three additional units. Another key opportunity to expand access is to offer grant funding to support enrollment in Healthy Texas Women. Clients often struggle with the lengthy application, and enrollment support is needed to ensure that every eligible Texan has a chance to access care through this program.

Again, we extend our deepest gratitude to Chair Huffman and this committee for these investments in women's healthcare. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

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