

CONTRACEPTIVE COVERAGE IN THE TEXAS CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Texas is one of just two states in the nation that does not fully cover birth control in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Texas consistently has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the nation. However, in the last decade, the teen birth rate has declined by an astonishing 50%. Research is clear that **access to effective contraception is a key factor** driving down teen birth rates.

However, for the tens of thousands of low-income teens enrolled in Texas CHIP, there is no easy access to birth control. Texas, along with North Dakota, is one of just two states that does not cover contraception in CHIP for purposes of pregnancy prevention. The results of this policy are clear. **Of teens enrolled in CHIP in FY 18, almost 1,600 experienced a documented pregnancy by the next year.** Additionally, many clinicians who prescribe birth control to CHIP patients for medical issues such as endometriosis or anemia struggle to understand and navigate the complexities of CHIP coverage.

Legislation such as **HB 800 (86R) and HB 835 (87R)**, filed by Rep. Donna Howard, would add contraception as a covered benefit in CHIP. **Parental consent** would be required for minors to access birth control, and the program would **not** cover abortion-inducing drugs.

The Legislative Budget Board has estimated that this policy would **produce cost savings to the state** that could become significant. These cost savings would occur in two ways:

- By preventing Medicaid costs associated with unintended births to teens on CHIP; as well as coverage of their children in Medicaid;
- By taking advantage of federal matching funds, which would cover approximately 75% of the cost of contraception. Currently, teens on CHIP are directed to the Family Planning program, which is 100% funded by state General Revenue.

Based on conservative estimates, these costs savings could quickly reach millions of dollars in General Revenue.

To reduce rates of unintended teen pregnancy and help young women achieve their goals, it is critical that we ensure that we add contraception as a benefit in the Texas CHIP program.

BIRTHS TO TEENS ON CHIP

1,592

teens enrolled in Texas CHIP in FY 18 had a documented pregnancy by the next year.

72 - 77%

of costs associated with adding contraception to CHIP would be covered by federal funds,

Source: Texas Campaign analysis of HHSC data

ONE CLINICIAN'S STORY

My 12 year old patient went to the emergency room for heavy menstrual bleeding. She was anemic, but at the time she did not need hospital admission or transfusion. Instead, the ER gave her a prescription for birth control, which is standard practice to control heavy bleeding. Because it was on the weekend and the prescription came from the ER, prior authorization was not able to be attained and CHIP wouldn't cover the prescription. CHIP does cover birth control with medical indication, but that involves work by the medical staff to make sure that they get correct paperwork done.

My patient continued to bleed, ended up back in the ER and now her hemoglobin was so low that she required admission and a blood transfusion. This is a medication that is not expensive and should not require a prior authorization. My patient could have avoided an expensive and traumatic hospital admission with basic coverage of birth control.

The Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is a statewide, non-profit, nonpartisan organization.

Our vision is that every Texas teen has access to the information and resources to prevent unintended pregnancy.

To read our research report on contraceptive coverage in Texas CHIP, visit www.txcampaign.org/CHIP