

New report examines potential impact of changes in Texas' Women's Health Program

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A new report finds that Texas policies to exclude Planned Parenthood clinics from a state family planning program – the Women's Health Program (WHP) – would result in leaving tens of thousands of women unable to get care.

"Deteriorating Access to Women's [Health Services](#) in Texas: Potential Effects of the Women's Health Program Affiliate Rule," released by the Geiger Gibson/RCHN Community Health Foundation Research Collaborative in the Department of Health Policy of the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, examines the impact of Texas' plan to bar [Planned Parenthood](#) clinics from participating in the state family planning program, even though they do not provide abortions. This study builds off a prior analysis released by the Collaborative, which found that these clinics provided care to about 52,000 WHP patients—approximately half of all WHP clients. This report more closely examines the extent to whether other family planning clinics that operate in the same markets as the Planned Parenthood clinics will be able to serve women after Planned Parenthood clinics are excluded. An analysis of five market areas in Texas (Bexar, Dallas, Hidalgo, Lubbock and Midland Counties) found that Planned Parenthood clinics are the dominant WHP providers in their markets, serving more than half to four-fifths of the WHP patients in their areas. Other family planning clinics in those areas lack the capacity to serve that large a spillover in patients, if Planned Parenthood clinics are no longer allowed to do so.

"Tens of thousands of Texas women could lose access to affordable family planning after Planned Parenthood clinics are shut out of the Women's Health Program," said Leighton Ku, PhD, MPH, Professor of Health Policy and lead author of the study. "And such threats to [health care access](#) can lead to significant public health and [economic consequences](#)."

The study also analyzed data about the costs and benefits of family planning services offered by the WHP. The researchers conclude that if tens of thousands of women would lose access to family planning after the Planned Parenthood clinics are excluded, the number of unplanned births in Texas could increase by 2,000 to 3,000. The state's policy change has led the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to conclude that the WHP would no longer qualify for federal matching funds, which now pay 90 percent of the program's cost. This would mean that the program would no longer save the state money, as it currently does, but that the WHP could create a net financial loss for the state of Texas.

"This study shows WHP not only provides [family planning](#) services, but offers other preventive health services, such as screening for cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure." Peter Shin, PhD, MPH, Collaborative director and a study co-author, commented, "The state's planned policy will mean that thousands of low-income women would also lose access to these essential preventive [health](#) services."

More information: To access the policy research brief, click here: sphhs.gwu.edu/departments/health_policy/research/publications/TexasWHP.pdf

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