



La Fe Policy Research and Education Center

Promoviendo Bienestar para Familias y Comunidad con Conocimiento, Confianza y Poder
Promoting Family and Community Well-being through Knowledge, Trust and Empowerment



April 28, 2009

RE: SUPPORTING WHP Bills:
SB 594

Senate Health & Human Services Committee
c/o Clerk-Kyle Baum
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Health & Human Services Committee Members,

As you are well aware, these are challenging times for Texans. Therefore, it has never become more fundamental for Texas to effectively maximize existing resources such as the Women's Health Program (WHP). As a result of declining access to health care, uninsured numbers for Texas are worse than previously estimated.¹ The WHP is a vital resource not only to preventative coverage for women but access to reproductive health care and family planning. For those reasons **we urge you to support SB594 (Van De Putte) as a means of maximizing the Women's Health Program (WHP) by:**

- **Providing adequate resources in order to improve outreach and marketing efforts for the WHP.** We know that the WHP is available to women ages 18 to 44 who live below 185% FPL. According to the most recent count, WHP only services 83,500 women. Yet in 2006, there were 933,239 uninsured women in that age and income group; 592,793 excluding non citizens. More resources must be allocated to improve the effectiveness of this program.
- **Improving continuity of care with postpartum transition from Medicaid to WHP** by identifying potential eligible women and modifying applicable administrative procedures. Currently, the Texas Medicaid program, which is limited in scope, is leaving Texas mothers' health vulnerable, as they are dropped from Medicaid 60 days after giving birth. With the majority of Latinas of child bearing age, the issue of access to culturally appropriate reproductive choices and unintended pregnancy is salient to the bienestar of our community. This is evident given the growth of births by Latinas in Texas, particular young mothers. *For Latinas, accessibility to medical and gynecological homes and healthcare is vital to healthy outcomes and addressing the health care challenges of Texas Latinas.*
- **Developing a WHP outreach pilot program** in Bexar County to assist in establishing eligibility through initial screenings, notifications of potential eligibility and information.

We look forward to partnering to improve the health and well-being of women in our community and in Texas. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us at 210.208.9494.

La Fe Policy Research and Education Center (La Fe PREC) is an organization that engages in efforts to create systematic changes to social and health policy through *policy analysis, education, leadership, and advocacy.*

Amy Casso

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¹ Families USA Report, "The Uninsured: A Closer Look" for Texas, cited more than two out of five people (43.9%) in Texas under the age of 65 went without health insurance for all or part of the two-year period 2007-2008. Of the 9.3 million uninsured Texans, more than three-quarters (80.5%) went without health coverage for six months or longer during this period. Among Latinas and Blacks, 60.4% and 43% respectively were uninsured, compared to 29.2% of White Non-Latinos.