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## **Study Finds Texas Women Are Not Receiving the Highly Effective Contraception They Desire**

AUSTIN, Texas (July 25, 2014) — Cuts to the state family planning budget by the 2011 Texas State Legislature have left many Texas women without the highly effective methods of contraception they desire in the nine months after giving birth. Research by the [Texas Policy Evaluation Project](#) (TxPEP) has shown that after giving birth, nearly 75 percent of women reported that their ideal form of birth control for the postpartum period would be an intrauterine device (IUD), a contraceptive implant, or sterilization, all highly effective methods that are almost guaranteed to prevent pregnancy. However, six months after birth, only 27 percent of women were using those preferred methods.

Nearly half of the women studied were not getting the highly effective birth control they wanted. Of these women, those using contraception were relying on less effective methods such as condoms, withdrawal, and the birth control pill.

Being low income and not having health insurance were the two key factors associated with women not using their preferred method of contraception. Indeed, among women wanting to delay future childbearing, those with a household income of \$75,000 or more had by far the best chance of obtaining a desired IUD or implant.

“We had already learned about the difficulties providing the most effective and expensive methods from interviewing Texas family planning clinic administrators after the 2011 family planning funding cuts, and this study shows the extent of the unmet demand,” said Dr. Joseph Potter, a demographer at the University of Texas at Austin and lead author of the study.

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Dr. Daniel Grossman, an obstetrician-gynecologist and Vice President for Research at [Ibis Reproductive Health](#), said, “Because over half of unintended pregnancies in the U.S. occur in the two years following delivery, we are especially concerned that a large number of women who do not want to conceive rely on less effective methods such as condoms and withdrawal as late as six months after delivery.”

The study, recently published in the journal *Contraception*, was based on interviews from over 800 women from Austin and El Paso who had just given birth and wanted to wait at least two years before having another child. The women had either private or public insurance.

Four other states give women the opportunity to insert an IUD or an implant immediately after childbirth, before they even leave the hospital. “It is our hope that Texas Medicaid and the Department of State Health Services will consider this option to increase access to highly effective contraception for women in Texas,” said Dr. Potter.

The TxPEP investigators will be following the women in the Austin part of the study for two years and assessing the number of unintended pregnancies that could have been prevented if the women were using their preferred method of contraception.

#### **About TxPEP**

The [Texas Policy Evaluation Project](#) (TxPEP) is a five-year, comprehensive effort to document and analyze the impact of the measures affecting reproductive health passed by the 82nd and 83rd Texas Legislatures. The project team includes researchers from the University of Texas at Austin’s Population Research Center, Ibis Reproductive Health, and the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

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If you would like to receive more information about this topic or schedule an interview with Dr. Potter, Dr. Hopkins, Dr. Aiken or Dr. White, please contact Laura Dixon at 512-788-2653 or [ldixon@prc.utexas.edu](mailto:ldixon@prc.utexas.edu).