

FAMILY ISSUE FACT SHEET

NO. 2021-05 (JANUARY 2021)

FAMILY HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM

SB 1251/HB 2404 APPROPRIATIONS; FAMILY HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many women seeking an abortion are unaware of the extensive resources available to them if they choose to continue their pregnancies. They are also often unaware of the anguish and regret ahead of them. Making an investment in providing and informing women of those resources serve Arizona women and their families.

Under SB 1251 and HB 2404, the Arizona Department of Health Services will distribute monies appropriated for the Family Health Pilot Program to a nonprofit organization to implement a statewide system. This system provides direct services, support services, social services case management, and referrals to the biological or adoptive parents of children under the age of two, including unborn children.

The purpose of the statewide system is to encourage healthy childbirth, support childbirth as an alternative to abortion, promote family formation, aid successful parenting, and increase families' economic self-sufficiency. With the use of both a physical and virtual clinic, the program will be available to residents of all counties in the state.

WHY SB 1251/HB 2404 ARE NEEDED

If Tina Stephens had access to the Family Health Pilot Program years ago, she says she would have a 12-year-old son or daughter today, instead of 12 years of grief, regret, and marital struggles.

Tina's husband didn't think the family could afford another child. Now, they both know the cost of Tina's abortion on her emotional health, and on their marriage, was far greater. Diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety, depression, and insomnia due to nightmares directly related to the abortion, could have all been avoided if she knew there were resources available to her, and knew people cared enough to walk with her through the process.

Tina recently said, "Had my husband and I known the emotional effects of an abortion, we would have never considered it. I wish I could go back every day of my life and undo it. My children lost a sibling, my husband and I lost a baby."

Countless Arizona women, just like Tina, find themselves in need of the help that the Family Health Pilot Program can provide.

THE FAMILY HEALTH PILOT PROGRAM

The Family Health Pilot Program is designed to reach pregnant women that are seeking to have an abortion, yet often are unaware of the services available to them, or do not know how to access them. For these women, providing a supportive voice, paired with meaningful assistance and contact with a nurse, is enough to give them the confidence to choose to continue their pregnancy – and spare them the grief of abortion.

A similar program in Texas found that the majority of women considering an abortion are doing so because of social or economic challenges: finances (73%), support (70%), employment (64%), stable housing and safety (49%), and transportation (19%). Most of these women say they would continue their pregnancy if not for those challenges. When provided with services, 49% of clients chose to forego an abortion and instead continue their pregnancy.

The Arizona program would provide supportive counseling, comprehensive social services needs assessment, comprehensive care plan to address major needs, assistance identifying and accessing needed public and private social programs in client's community, regular and ongoing follow-up, and virtual childbirth and parenting classes.

The funding would be used for: 1) direct-to-client advertising in a concerted outreach marketing effort to reach individuals not aware of the existence of alternative services; 2) personnel, including a team of registered nurses, social workers, and care agents; 3) operating expenses, including rent, utilities, software licenses, and other expenses related to program services; and 4) administrative expenses related to program management and oversight.

WHO FACILITATES THE PROGRAM?

The Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS) will distribute \$1,500,000 in each of fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 appropriated for the Family Health Pilot Program to a nonprofit organization to implement a statewide system. Any non-profit organization, including any pregnancy resource center in Arizona can apply for the grant through ADHS.

The nonprofit organization that receives the monies must demonstrate both of the following:

1. Experience in marketing and serving the eligible patient population.
2. That the organization can begin serving clients statewide within sixty days of receiving the money.

TALKING POINTS

- 1. Many pregnant women seeking an abortion are unaware of the many services available to them. The Family Health Pilot Program reaches these women with on-going support and assistance, which often is enough to give them the confidence to choose to continue their pregnancy.**

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- 2. There are countless women in our state that this program can rescue from a life of regret and pain. Tina Stephens can attest to that. Not knowing there were resources available, she went through with the abortion, which has haunted her for 12 years. She said she would have a 12-year-old son or daughter today if she had access to the Family Health Pilot Program then.**
- 3. The program supports Arizona as a state that values life, and meeting the needs of pregnant women and their preborn children. With a proven record, the program is a valuable investment in vulnerable Arizonan women.**
- 4. Providing comprehensive assistance to vulnerable women struggling with unplanned pregnancies is something everyone can agree on.**
- 5. A similar program in Texas has found that the majority of women who seek an abortion do so because of social or economic challenges. By providing an array of services to assist with these challenges, 49% of the program's clients choose to forego an abortion and instead continue their pregnancy.**

CONCLUSION

The Family Health Pilot Program is a practical way for the state to meet the needs of pregnant women and their preborn children. A similar program in Texas has had outstanding results. Combining a concerted outreach marketing effort to reach individuals not aware of the existence of alternative services, with a care team of nurses, social workers, and caregivers has empowered nearly half of the program's clients seeking an abortion to continue their pregnancy.