

## **WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE COUNTS-COUNT WOMEN IN** *Principles for Reproductive Health Care*

Women's health care matters: to their families, their communities and to the State of California. Women are the primary consumers of health care across their life span and are the key decision-makers for their families' health care needs. As such, women's access to comprehensive, preventive and quality health care is critical to promoting the health and economic future of California.

Many individuals and organizations are developing specific proposals for how to reform California's health care system. Some focus exclusively on private insurance and health plans, others include the extension of Medi-Cal or other publicly sponsored coverage. Regardless of the ultimate results of the health reform discussions, we believe that adherence to the following reproductive health care principles is essential to the health and welfare of the women, men and families of this state – principles that will ultimately save money because they focus on prevention and responsible health decisions.

### **WOMEN ARE THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE**

- 75%-90% of all family personal health decisions are made by women
- 17% of women in California are uninsured
- Latinas in California are the least likely to be insured: more than 22% lack coverage
- In California, women between the ages of 18 and 29, have the highest rate of uninsurance and the lowest rate of employer-based coverage
- 80% of uninsured women are in **working** families

### **PRINCIPLES FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE**

#### Equitable and Confidential Access to Care

- All women and their families, including those who are undocumented, should have access to health coverage.
- True access to health coverage requires that care be affordable and culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Equitable access to health care must ensure that all women and their families with public coverage receive the same level of care as women with private coverage.
- Confidentiality for people of all ages seeking reproductive health care should be guaranteed.
- Services must be accessible, including availability of providers throughout different geographic locations.
- Health care providers' reimbursement must be consistent with the cost of doing business in California and adequate to ensure a sufficient number of diverse quality providers in each area of care.

#### Comprehensive Services

- Coverage should include a comprehensive range of services that address women's unique health care needs throughout their lifespan.
- Coverage should include all pregnancy related services, including prenatal care, labor and delivery, and abortion.
- Reform efforts should preserve current pharmaceutical and contraceptive equity benefits.
- Access to comprehensive services and information should not be limited by conscience objections.

#### Cost Effectiveness and Prevention

- The most cost effective way to deliver health care is to ensure comprehensive primary and preventive care for all women and their families.
- Preventive services should include the current standard of care for reproductive health services, including family planning, breast and cervical cancer screening and care for sexually transmitted infections.
- Coverage should include support for women to decide when and whether to become a parent.
- Coverage should include services to ensure safe pregnancies, safely ending pregnancies and services for women who might become pregnant in the future.