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**During Women's Health Month, Shapiro Administration Emphasizes  
the Importance of Accessing Preventive Health Services**

*Most health insurers are required to cover preventive health services for women at no cost*

**Harrisburg, PA** – May is Women's Health Month, and the **Pennsylvania Insurance Department (PID)**, the **Department of Health (DOH)**, the **Department of Human Services (DHS)** and the **Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP)** today reminded women about the importance of preventive health services that are available to them at no cost through their insurance and reminded them of the critical health services and resources available to them through state agencies.

"The Shapiro Administration is committed to protecting Pennsylvanians' freedom and ensuring they are empowered with choices, especially when it comes to women and their preventive healthcare needs. We want Pennsylvania women to know they have access to preventive health services that are designed to ensure overall wellness at no cost," said **PID Policy Director Caroline Beohm**. "Preventive care plays a critical role in identifying life-threatening illnesses such as cervical cancer and breast cancer. Knowing you have access to these life-saving preventive services can improve women's health outcomes across their lifespan."

According to the [Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention \(AWHP\)](#), 22 percent of American women skipped preventive health services, like a yearly check-up, in the 12 months leading up to this survey. About 14 percent of women skipped a recommended medical test or treatment, and 22 percent of women did not get a vaccine recommended by their doctor. Additionally, six percent of women acknowledged they were unsure all together which preventive services, screenings or vaccines they should be getting.

Under the Affordable Care Act, most health insurers must provide coverage without requiring women to pay a deductible, copayment or coinsurance on the following preventive health services:

- Well-woman preventive visits;
- Screening for urinary incontinence;
- Screening for breast cancer;
- Screening for cervical cancer;
- Screening for anxiety;
- Screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence;
- Obesity prevention in midlife women;
- Breastfeeding services and supplies;
- Contraception;
- Counseling for sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
- Screening for HIV; and
- Screening for diabetes in pregnancy and after pregnancy.

The [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) notes that these preventive services have real measurable outcomes that are reducing the chances of developing a chronic disease while also improving individuals' quality of life.

The Department of Health has invested in numerous disease prevention efforts, from immunizations to disease testing to educational outreach.

“The Department of Health recognizes the importance preventive health services play in reducing the impact of disease for women in Pennsylvania,” explained **Department of Health Executive Deputy Secretary Kristen Rodack**. “One initiative that has proven especially beneficial is the Department’s Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. The program is working to eliminate health disparities by supporting cancer screenings for women with no insurance or who are underinsured.”

On an almost daily basis, DOH public health professionals are in communities throughout Pennsylvania offering preventative services and presentations on:

- Communicable disease;
- Vaccine-preventable diseases;
- Chronic diseases;
- Lyme and tickborne diseases;
- STD/HIV;
- Environmental health;
- Public health preparedness; and
- A variety of other public health topics

Pennsylvania’s recent work to address maternal health disparities includes [expanded access to doulas for Medicaid recipients](#). This change creates a path for doulas to become certified providers, increases women’s access to doulas as part of their care

teams, and helps to improve birth outcomes in Pennsylvania, especially for people of color.

"Together with maternal health care providers and advocates across the Commonwealth, the Shapiro Administration is working to ensure that all women and birthing people can get the care and support they need and deserve," said **Department of Human Services Special Advisor Sara Goulet**. "From expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage to doula services now being covered through Medicaid to the new Women's Service Program, DHS is committed to providing services for everyone that are equitable, inclusive, and culturally sensitive and put mothers and their children on a path to good health and a vibrant, enriching life."

The [Women's Service Program](#) provides critical health services, including:

- Comprehensive prenatal education programs;
- Antenatal care supports;
- Menstrual health education or access to menstrual health hygiene products;
- Sexually Transmitted Infection ("STI") testing;
- Postpartum health supports; and
- Early detection and prevention of health conditions.

More information on Department of Human Services programs, including women's health, is available at [dhs.pa.gov](https://dhs.pa.gov).

"The Shapiro Administration is deeply committed to the health and well-being of mothers and children across the Commonwealth," said **DDAP Secretary Dr. Latika Davis-Jones**. "At DDAP, we know that substance use disorder is a family illness that impacts mother, baby, and entire families. That is why meeting the needs of this vulnerable population, including funding efforts for direct connections to services for pregnant and postpartum women, is a top priority."

Help is available for Pennsylvanians looking for substance use disorder treatment options or resources for themselves or a loved one. Pennsylvanians can call DDAP's Get Help Now Hotline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). This confidential hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to all Pennsylvanians regardless of insurance and is available in both English and Spanish. It is staffed by trained professionals who can connect you directly to local treatment and resources. There is also a [chat option](#) on the [DDAP website](#) as well as a texting option at 717-216-0905 for individuals who prefer that method.

PID urges Pennsylvanians who have insurance questions, or who wish to file a complaint on a denied preventive service, may contact PID's Consumer Services Bureau [online](#) or by calling 1-877-881-6388.

Governor Josh Shapiro has always [defended women's healthcare](#) and has [called on insurers](#) to make reproductive healthcare options more accessible and affordable for

women. The Governor's 2024-25 budget proposal increases support for health care providers that provide high-quality family planning tools and reproductive health care services and includes **\$3 million** to provide menstrual hygiene products at no cost to students in schools.

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