

# PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS & UPDATES

TEXAS RESEARCH-TO-POLICY COLLABORATION



March 2023

## 2023 TX RPC LEGISLATIVE BILL TRACKER

The TX RPC Project has launched a new legislative bill tracker! Since the 2013 session, the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living has hosted an online legislative bill tracker that identifies proposed bills related to child and adolescent health. The tracker is segmented into general categories such as food access and insecurity, maternal and child health, child behavioral health, healthcare access, school and after-school care, and more.

- **Bills tracked are selected based on the Center's vision/mission on child and adolescent health, research by our TX RPC researchers, and health priorities identified by TX RPC legislators during baseline interviews.**

USE THE BILL TRACKER

## TX RPC HEALTH POLICY RESOURCES

### Maternal and Child Health

Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project

*Released February 14, 2023*

This report provides an overview of maternal and child health outcomes in Texas, including how the quality of a mother's pregnancy impacts the health and well-being of the mother and the baby, and policy recommendations to support maternal healthcare.

#### Key Takeaways:

- The maternal mortality crisis is compounded in Texas by the number of maternity care deserts across the state.
- Among all 50 states, Texas has the third highest percentage of births to women who do not receive adequate prenatal care.

### Produce Prescription (Rx) Programs

Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project

*Released August 30, 2022*

This report examines how Produce Prescription (Rx) Programs can impact food insecurity status and improve the health outcomes of Texans. While Produce Rx programs have been shown to improve access to produce and health outcomes, programs can also help connect healthcare to food systems by providing individuals with the necessary resources to eat healthy foods.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Produce Rx programs increase access to fruits and vegetables in low-income

- communities.
- Produce Rx programs improve the affordability of fresh produce.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Vehicle Value Limits**

#### **Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project**

*Updated August 22, 2022*

Vehicle Asset Tests (VATs) are used to determine SNAP eligibility by placing limits on the value of vehicles households may own. Cars that meet SNAP eligibility may be less reliable, have higher mileage, and be approximately 10 years or older, and with a lack of widespread public transportation in Texas, most people require reliable vehicles to get to work.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- VATs may prevent otherwise eligible applicants from qualifying for SNAP benefits and increases the workload of state employees who determine SNAP eligibility.
- Increased workload leads to increased administrative expenses of the program, the costs of which are borne by the state.

## **TX RPC LUNCH & LEARN EVENTS**

**TX RPC has hosted four Lunch & Learn events since August 2022. View all TX RPC Lunch & Learn events [here](#).**

### **Maternal and Child Health in Texas**

**Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living** *TX RPC Project Lunch & Learn Event - January 4, 2023*

This TX RPC Project Lunch & Learn presentation by Dr. David Lakey provided an overview of maternal and child health in Texas and described opportunities to improve maternal and child health outcomes in Texas.

### **Food Insecurity in Texas**

**Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living** *TX RPC Project Lunch & Learn Event - August 25, 2022*

This TX RPC Project Lunch & Learn presentation by Dr. Alexandra van den Berg provided an overview of food insecurity in Texas and described opportunities to support individuals, families, and children experiencing food insecurity.

## **TX RPC MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Hoelscher Appointed to Serve on National Committee to Advise the Development of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines**

**Deanna Hoelscher, PhD, RDN, LD, CNS, FISBNPA - UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in Austin**

Dr. Deanna Hoelscher has been appointed to serve on the national committee to advise the development of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines. The committee will be tasked with reviewing the current body of science in key nutrition topics and will also develop a report that includes recommendations for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Food and Drug Administration as they develop Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Read more about her appointment [here](#)!

## **TX RPC PARTNER EVENTS**

## Register for Upcoming Webinars

- [What Changes Will This Legislative Session have for School Health?](#) (April 13, 2023 @ 11:30am)
- [Michael & Susan Dell Center Lectureship in Child Health: What's for Lunch? The Past, Present, and Future of School Nutrition](#) (April 27, 2023, @ 12:00pm)

## View Past Webinar Recordings

- Food Insecurity in Texas Webinar Series
  - [An Overview from Public Health and Pediatric Perspectives](#) (February 16, 2023)
  - [Clinic and Community-Based Approaches](#) (February 23, 2023)
  - [State Level Policies to Make an Impact](#) (March 9, 2023)
- [What Exactly Does a School Nurse Do?](#) (March 29, 2023)
- [World Obesity Day Summit 2023](#) (March 1, 2023)

## TX RPC RESEARCHER PUBLICATIONS

### Featured Publication

#### [Clinical Outcomes of a Large-Scale, Partnership-Based Regional Food Prescription Program: Results of a Quasi-Experimental Study](#)

##### Key Takeaways:

- Across all patients that were referred to the Houston Food Bank (HFB) Food Prescription (Food Rx) Program, those that redeemed food prescriptions at least once saw significantly higher declines in HbA1c (a marker of average blood sugar levels) than those that did not redeem their prescriptions.
- Half of all the patients who redeemed their prescriptions six or more times saw clinically significant HbA1c declines, compared to only 34% of patients that did not redeem their prescriptions. Prescription redemption was also associated with improvements in blood pressure.
- This study adds to the growing evidence that Food Rx programs can reduce the risk of diabetes and other related chronic diseases.

### Texas Population Publications

#### Southeast Texas

#### [Clinical Outcomes of a Large-Scale, Partnership-Based Regional Food Prescription Program: Results of a Quasi-Experimental Study](#)

#### West Texas

#### [Nutrition and Health Programming and Outreach in Grocery Retail Settings: A Community Coalition in Action](#)

#### General Texas

#### [Impact of Heat on All-Cause and Cause-Specific Mortality: A Multi-City Study in Texas](#)

#### [Lessons Learned from Interdisciplinary Efforts to Combat COVID-19 Misinformation: Development of Agile Integrative Methods from Behavioral Science, Data Science, and Implementation Science](#)

#### [Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety and Subsequent Use of Nicotine and THC in Electronic Cigarettes](#)

### General Publications

#### [E-Cigarette Quit Attempts and Experiences in a Convenience Sample of Adult Users](#)

#### [Longitudinal Transition Patterns to Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults Never Tobacco Users: Findings from the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health Study, 2014-2019](#)

#### [Mixed Methods Evaluation of Vaping and Tobacco Use Prevention Interventions Among Youth](#)

## RESOURCE REMINDERS

The TX RPC Project develops accessible and accurate public health policy-related resources from experts in the field. If you would like to request information on a public health topic, please complete the following form:

[Access Form](#)

The Texas RPC Project health policy resources are available on our website. See below for links to specific categories of resources:

- [TX RPC Health Policy Resources](#) (resources available to legislators to provide data-driven information on health-related topics)
- [Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Webinars](#)
- [TX RPC Newsletters Archive](#)
- [Texas Legislative Bill Tracker](#)
- [Texas Child Health Status Reports and Toolkits](#)
- [Newsletter Resource Sharing Form for Publication](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources](#)

## ABOUT THE TX RPC PROJECT

The Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration (TX RPC) Project is a non-partisan network that aims to bridge research and policy by supporting partnerships between child health researchers and policymakers. The TX RPC Project team and overall network are available to support Texas policymakers with informational requests or resources related to health topics, during the interim and throughout the 2023 Legislative Session.

If any legislators are interested in collaborating with us to receive state-, district- and local-level data-driven information, please reach out to [TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu).

## SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES

Follow us on social media to stay up-to-date on reports, resources, and events.



## CONTACT US

For more information, email [TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu).

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Texas Research-to-Policy  
Collaboration Project

