



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **Press Release**

# **March 8, International Women's Health Day: Family Planning Education is Critical to Mexico's Success**

*International Women's Health week March 6-11 brings awareness to dearth of reproductive health care*

**DALLAS** – When a woman's health improves, her family, the workforce and the economy improves as a result. International Women's Health Day, celebrated March 8, was initiated to bring awareness to the plight of women's health care across the globe, especially in underdeveloped nations. Texas' nearest international neighbor, Mexico, once seen as having an irreversible health care system, has begun to show improvements and to implement family planning education services.

The world's population is nearly 6 billion and the health of women and children depends on the adequate planning and spacing of the number of births. The increased pace of population growth is an obstacle to the improvement of living conditions.

Did you know?

- Throughout the world there are more than 300 million couples who wish to limit the size of their families, but do not have access to family planning information and services.
- When pregnancies come too early, too often, or too late in a woman's life, health risks increase for both the woman and her children.
- Of the children born this year, one in 5 Africans, one in 7 Asians and one in 10 Latin Americans will not live to see their fifth birthday. By comparison, in Europe and North America - where family planning and childcare services are more accessible - child mortality is reduced to one in 80.

In the world today there are only 10 countries with 100 million or more inhabitants. Mexico is in 11th place with a population approaching 100 million – which means they will represent 2% of the total world population.

About 75% of Mexicans live in urban areas, many along the U.S. - Mexico border and in Mexico City. According to some estimates, the population of Mexico City and the surrounding area is approximately 20 million, which makes it the largest concentration



of people in the world. Population growth, coupled with large-scale migration from rural to urban areas, is straining Mexico's infrastructure and government services.

According to the Fundación Mexicana para la Planificación Familiar (MEXFAM, an affiliate of International Planned Parenthood Federation), the country's leading private family planning provider in Mexico, only 44% of married women of reproductive age in rural areas use some kind of contraceptive.

However, Mexico is beginning to make strides in preventing unintended pregnancies. Mexico was one of the first Latin American countries to implement a government-sponsored reproductive health program for adolescents; however sexual and reproductive health programs still tend to focus on the needs of only adult women. Currently in Mexico, the average age to get married is 19 years old, the average age to have a child is 21 years old and 15% of births are to women between the ages of 15-19. Currently, the Mexican government supports sexuality education programs beginning at age 12, and the government has expressed a commitment to promoting the use of condoms.

Planned Parenthood has always advocated for and provided accessible, low-cost reproductive health care in order to improve the lives of women, their families and their communities.

For 70 years, PPNT has provided compassionate medical care in North Texas. In 2004, PPNT clinics served more than 80,000 patients in its 28 clinics. PPNT also provides health education outreach to 12,000 individuals a year.