

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, CHAIR
FINANCE
NOMINATIONS
TRANSPORTATION
WATER & RURAL AFFAIRS

THE SENATE OF TEXAS



LOIS W. KOLKHORST

STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 18

CAPITOL OFFICE:
GE.4 • P.O. Box 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711
(512) 463-0118

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: 512-463-0118

February 12, 2019

Senator Kolkhorst Files Maternal and Infant Health Improvement Package

AUSTIN - Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) has filed a package of bills she said are needed to continue the positive gains recently made in the state's maternal mortality rate. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, Kolkhorst said the legislation will save lives and increase efficiencies in the state healthcare system.

"Our state is making strides in the prevention of pregnancy-related deaths, but there is more work to do. That's why this plan brings together our hospitals, health professionals and families to develop the best practices for protecting every mother and newborn in Texas," said Kolkhorst.

In 2017, lawmakers passed SB 17 written by Kolkhorst, which streamlined the way our state maintains its maternal health data and reauthorized the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force. To build upon that effort, Kolkhorst has filed SB 750 seeking to maximize state efforts to address maternal mortality as detailed by the Health and Human Services Commission's report, *State Efforts to Address Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in Texas*. If passed, SB 750 will address the findings and recommendations of the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and update Texas law to align with new federal legislation on maternal mortality review committees.

In 2013, then-Representative Kolkhorst wrote and passed HB 15 which created new designation levels for Neonatal Intensive Care Units and maternal levels of care across Texas. The Perinatal Advisory Council went on to develop standards for each level of designation and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) determined and assigned the levels. To improve the current process for how those levels are designated, Kolkhorst filed SB 749, requiring an independent process for appeal of designations by DSHS, and clarifying the role of professional consultations, telemedicine and scope of practice.

Kolkhorst also filed SB 748 that would create a new and reliable fund to repair, upgrade and expand screenings conducted by the Texas Newborn Screening Laboratory. A longtime advocate for better price transparencies in healthcare, Kolkhorst filed SB 747 to see that the state publicly posts and updates the costs of newborn screenings and prohibits health insurance plans from limiting reimbursement to providers who administer state required newborn screening tests. ###