

Texas Department of Criminal Justice



Report on Pregnant Inmates

December 2024

Texas Board of Criminal Justice

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Introduction

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is required by the 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act, Article V, Agency Rider 61 to prepare a report on incarcerated pregnant inmates.

The rider requires the report include the following:

- the number of incarcerated women admitted annually;
- the number of pregnant inmates admitted annually;
- the date, time, duration, rationale, and location of the use of restraints on incarcerated pregnant inmates;
- the number of incarcerated pregnant inmates diagnosed and treated for intellectual and developmental disorders or behavioral health issues; and
- the number of births given during incarceration.

Background

During an individual's intake and orientation upon arriving to a TDCJ facility, the person receives an extensive medical screening and evaluation by the facility's medical provider, the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) or Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC). Part of that medical evaluation includes screening for pregnancy and communicable diseases. Similarly, each female inmate during the diagnostic process undergoes trauma screening to determine whether the inmate has experienced adverse childhood experiences or other significant trauma. If needed, individuals are referred to the appropriate medical or mental health care professional for treatment.

TDCJ correctional staff, along with any other department employee whose duties involve contact with pregnant inmates, receive additional training relating to medical and mental health care issues applicable to pregnant inmates at female facilities. The training includes information regarding the appropriate care and supervision for pregnant inmates.

Number of Incarcerated Women Admitted Annually

Number of Incarcerated Women Admitted Annually						
FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
10,799	10,529	6,313	6,516	7,058	8,088	7,995



Number of Pregnant Inmates Admitted Annually

Number of Pregnant Inmates Admitted Annually						
FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
204	243	116	102	98	87	87

Number of Incarcerated Pregnant Inmates Diagnosed and Treated for Intellectual and Developmental Disorders or Behavioral Health Issues

In accounting for the number of incarcerated pregnant inmates diagnosed and treated for intellectual and developmental disorders or behavioral health issues, the agency includes pregnant inmates admitted in each respective fiscal year who were treated for an intellectual or developmental disability or who were on an inpatient or outpatient mental health caseload during the incarceration period in the total:

Number of Incarcerated Pregnant Inmates Diagnosed and Treated for Intellectual and Developmental Disorders or Behavioral Health Issues						
FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
31	30	24	37	40	24	24

Number of Births Given During Incarceration

Number of Births Given During Incarceration						
FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
156	150	111	55	70	71	66

Use of Restraints on Pregnant Inmates

Pregnant inmates are secured with hand restraints in front of the body, when necessary, during escorts or transports.

Hand restraints applied to pregnant inmates are the least restrictive yet necessary to ensure safety and security and to prevent an escape. Leg restraints, restraint belts, and transport chains are not used any time after the woman's pregnancy has been confirmed by a medical professional due to the increased risk of a forward fall.

Hand restraints are not utilized when compelling medical reasons advise against them, unless the warden or a medical professional determines the use of security

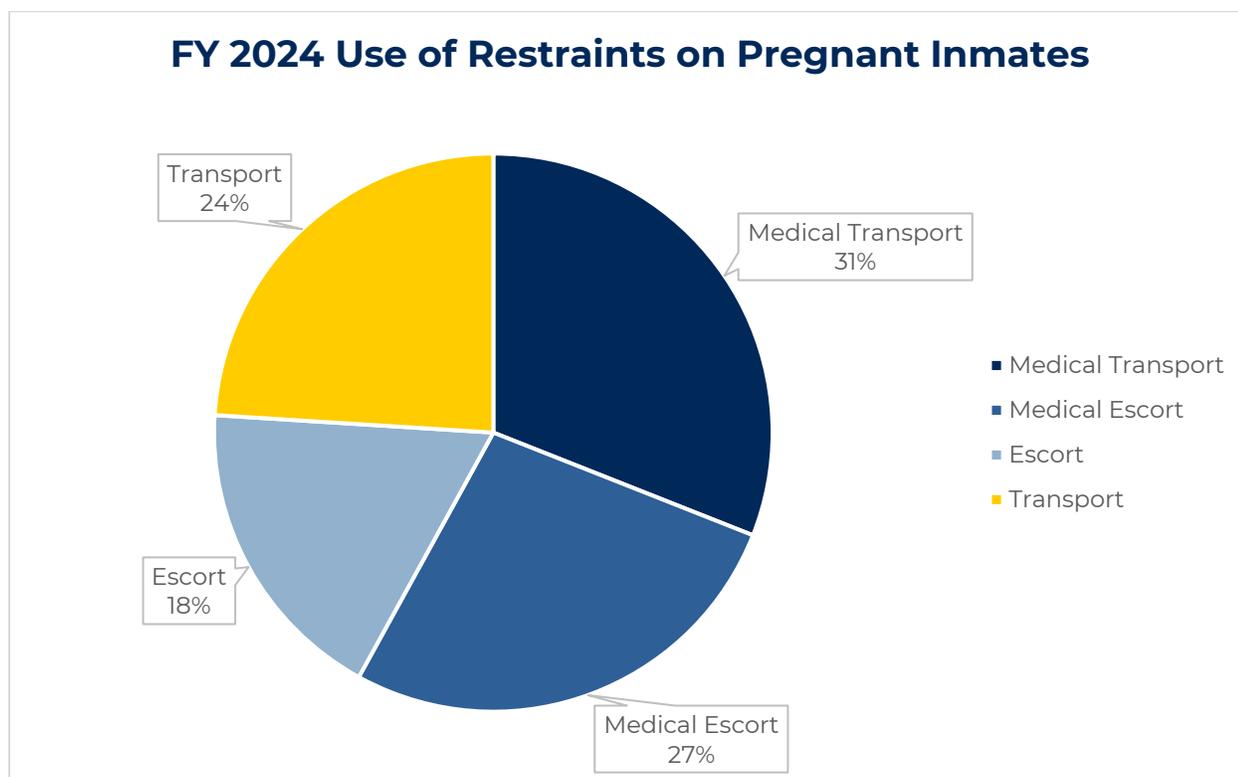


restraints are necessary to ensure the safety and security of the inmate, the unborn child or infant, employees, medical staff, or the public. Compelling medical reasons include when a pregnant inmate is in the active stages of labor, experiencing childbirth, or in immediate post-delivery recuperation.

Hand restraints are used when necessary for the following reasons:

- Medical transport off of the unit to another unit or community hospital for a medical reason;
- Medical escort within the current unit of assignment for a medical reason;
- Transport off the unit to another unit for a non-medical reason; or
- Escort within the current unit of assignment for a non-medical reason.

Date, Time, Duration, Rationale, and Location of the Use of Restraints on Incarcerated Pregnant Inmates



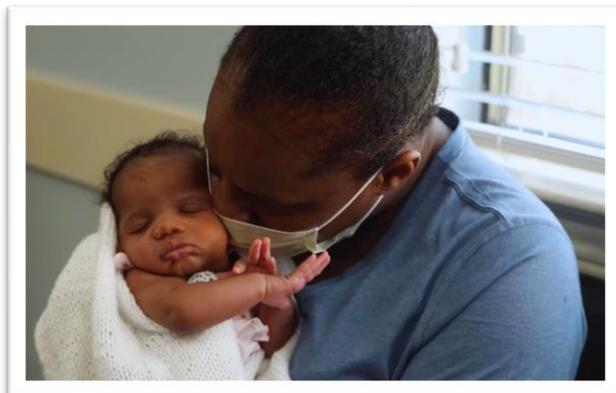
Programs and Services Provided for Pregnant Inmates and Parenting Females

Pregnant inmates are provided educational programming relating to pregnancy and parenting. These programs include instruction regarding appropriate prenatal care and hygiene, the effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol and drugs on a developing fetus, parenting skills, and medical and mental health issues applicable to children. In addition, TDCJ ensures that pregnant inmates are provided sufficient food and dietary supplements, including prenatal vitamins, as ordered by an appropriate medical professional.

To assist in postpartum recovery, for a period of 72 hours after the birth of an infant by an inmate, the infant is allowed to remain with the inmate, unless a medical professional determines doing so would pose a health or safety risk to the inmate or infant. Additionally, the inmate has access to nutritional or hygiene-related products necessary to care for the infant.

Baby and Mother Bonding Initiative (BAMBI)

The Baby and Mother Bonding Initiative (BAMBI) is a collaboration between TDCJ, UTMB, and the Santa Maria Hostel, Inc., to provide child development education, parenting training and bonding opportunities in a residential facility for up to 22 new mothers.



As of September 30, 2024, 393 mothers and 396 infants have benefited from this program since its inception. The goals of the program are to increase the female inmate's self-development; increase social and cognitive competencies for mother and child; provide for the development of a positive and productive relationship between mother and child; enhance parenting and nurturing skills and abilities of incarcerated mothers; develop the mother's empathy and ability to place another's need above self; provide prompt, loving, and consistent care for infants to develop their sense of trust; and support healthy mother-infant attachment.

Preliminary screening of pregnant inmates for program participation is conducted by the TDCJ Rehabilitation Programs Division (TDCJ-RPD). Participation eligibility includes length of sentence, offense type, and custody status. After meeting initial eligibility, the UTMB will perform medical and mental health screenings. Upon

approval for program participation, mother and infant will be screened again following delivery, and arrangements for transporting them to the secure residential facility will be made by the facility's staff, TDCJ-RPD, UTMB, and TDCJ's transportation department.

Current program capacity allows for 22 mothers and their infants to reside in a unique setting that supports the mother while she completes her sentence and provides her baby with time to form a healthy attachment, which is important to healthy growth, socialization, and psychological well-being throughout the child's formative development. Over the course of the program, the mother will receive child development education, life skills, infant first aid and CPR, nutrition education, peer recovery, cognitive skills, anger management, and family reunification sessions. Additional programming may also include substance abuse education and GED classes.

BAMBI Advocacy Student Scholars Program (BASS)

Since 2016, the University of Texas Medical Branch School of Nursing (UTMB-SON), TDCJ, and BAMBI Program have collaborated to provide valuable opportunities to improve health knowledge, bonding, and breastfeeding access for pregnant inmate mothers by utilizing student nurse-led education and bedside support.

From Fall 2020 to Fall 2024, 159 undergraduate nursing students have been trained and participated in providing over 1,167 hours at the inmate mother's bedside at John Sealy Hospital, participated in 50 newborn deliveries, and conducted 87 health educational sessions at the TDCJ Carole Young Medical Facility for female inmates.

Beginning in the Spring of 2020, students were unable to conduct face-to-face education or birth support experiences based on COVID-19 restrictions. The UTMB-SON students provided student-led educational sessions to the BAMBI facility inmate mothers via ZOOM for two semesters during the COVID pandemic.



This highly successful and impactful project has been transformed into a formal scholar's program at UTMB-SON aptly named the BAMBI Advocacy Student Scholars program (BASS). The BASS program, initiated in the Spring of 2022, provides an opportunity for select nursing students to fully explore maternal health equity, health care policy, and advocacy. BASS students are exposed to an innovative service-learning environment at the TDCJ Carole Young Medical Facility. The BASS

program offers students an opportunity to support at-risk populations while fostering cultural humility, engaging scholarship, and developing leadership skills.

During the fall semesters, the BASS program students are provided an opportunity to present seven education sessions for the pregnant inmate mothers at the TDCJ Carole Young Medical Facility and serve on call for birth, labor, and postpartum support. Each spring semester, select students are provided an opportunity to return to the BAMBI facility and provide targeted health education for the inmate mothers.

Best for Baby

“Best for Baby” is a peer-education program focusing on childhood development, stages of pregnancy, and parenting skills. The program covers a variety of topics including how pregnancy occurs, what changes the baby and the mother experience during pregnancy, and why prenatal care is important. Each program session ends with a demonstration and participation in physical stretches that help ease some of the discomforts individuals experience during pregnancy. This program is available at the following facilities: Carole Young, Crain, East Texas Treatment Facility, Hilltop, Murray, O’Daniel, Plane State Jail, San Saba, and Woodman State Jail.

Parenting and Reunification

Parenting and Reunification is a peer-to-peer facilitated educational program. This program is a two-part course aimed at improving the incarcerated parent’s relationship with their child and planning for reunification upon release. This program is available at the following facilities: Carole Young, Crain, Hilltop, , Murray, O’Daniel, Plane State Jail, San Saba, and Woodman State Jail.



Day with Mom Program

Offered by dedicated TDCJ volunteers, incarcerated mothers are provided the opportunity to spend approximately six hours on a scheduled Saturday with their children and children’s guardian in the “Day with Mom” program. The family is permitted to visit, eat, and recreate together. Families play board games, musical chairs, and compete in a coloring contest where everyone is a winner, and prizes are given to the children. This valuable program offers families the opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships.

Women’s Storybook Project of Texas

Women’s Storybook Project of Texas (WSP), in partnership with the Windham School District (Windham), is a program that builds relationships between mothers experiencing incarceration and their children through literature. This special program helps mothers to comfort and nurture their children with activities such as reading bedtime stories through audio recordings. Volunteers visit women’s campuses in Central and East Texas once a month to record mothers reading books to their children. Children receive a copy of the recording and a new book each month. Twelve Windham campuses participated this school year with over 3,400 books added to children’s home libraries. WSP contributes the largest number of Windham volunteers, and the number is constantly growing.

Family Literacy

Family Literacy is a Windham program that provides parents in TDCJ the opportunity to become effective, supportive and active partners in their children’s education. The program teaches parents the importance of academics and offers them the opportunity to participate in parent-teacher conferences with their child’s school. To increase child engagement in interactive reading, the program includes books that represent a wide range of diverse backgrounds. Additionally, program participants can engage in remote interactive reading activities with their children, allowing them to practice skills learned in the program and bond with their child. This program is offered at the Hilltop and Woodman campuses.



Parenting

Windham’s Parenting course addresses parenting skills and family wellness. Based on the Acceleron Prep to Parent® program, the communication-based, interactive curriculum supports the development of healthy family relationships and teaches



compassionate assertiveness, empathic/active listening, empowerment, and other skills to strengthen family relationships. Participants engage in an introspective process of positive personal change that addresses the following units of study: personal foundations, vision values, family dynamics, ages and stages, dealing with feelings, consider then respond, choices and consequences, discipline vs punishment, praise and encouragement during incarceration, the well child, risky behaviors, tech troubles, legal challenges, parenting in practice, and transition and reunification. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services partners with Windham to refer students for completion of necessary courses.

This program is offered at the following campuses: Crain, Hilltop, Hobby, Marlin, Murray, O'Daniel, Plane State Jail, and Woodman State Jail.

Reentry Services

Reentry services are available to all individuals returning to the community. Services include identification document processing, risk needs assessments, reentry planning, employment services, and linkages to the Healthcare Marketplace, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Healthy Texas Women. For individuals with special needs, to include mental health and medical needs, additional supports for community intervention and resource linkage for continuity of care is provided through our Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments program and reentry special needs staff.



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