

Immigration Position Paper

Revised March 15, 2017



OVERVIEW

During the presidential campaign, negative rhetoric around immigration had a real impact on our patients. Since taking office, the President has signed executive orders and memoranda that have a direct and detrimental impact on immigrants, their communities, and the community health centers that care for them.

Patients of community health centers have gone so far as to cancel appointments and question whether to maintain their enrollment in programs like Medicaid, out of fear of deportation, putting their health and the health of their communities at risk.

THE PROBLEM

ICE Raids: The President's call for increased Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids has directly impacted our patients. Health Centers have been forced to evaluate policies and reassure patients that they should continue to seek services.

Fears of deportation have become so acute that our clinics are seeing an increase in behavioral health and mental health conditions like depression, anxiety and stress.

Workforce: Many health centers rely on qualified healthcare providers who are authorized to work in the country under the terms of a visa or work permit. These providers are familiar with the communities they serve and are providing our patients culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

We are already experiencing a severe shortage of health care providers throughout California, and any changes to current visa and work permit rules could further hamper our health centers' ability to serve their patients.

Nationwide, more than 2 million health care workers are foreign-born. A quarter of practicing physicians are graduates of foreign medical schools and 17 percent of trainees right now are from foreign countries.

The Association of American Medical Colleges, which has repeatedly warned of a U.S. doctor shortage, identified 260 applicants to residency programs from the seven countries included on the first immigration ban alone. The average resident treats about 3,000 patients, according to AAMC, so those 260 applicants could treat up to 780,000 patients if they are allowed to matriculate.

OUR POSITION

California's community health centers maintain our commitment to serve everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. We are the foundation of the state's safety net which serves millions of low-income, vulnerable communities.

CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates will continue to advocate for legislation that furthers community health centers' mission of providing high-quality care to all Californians. We ask that you support the immigrant population that is such an integral part of the communities we serve.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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