

# 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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# Immigration Talking Points

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## Immigration Policy (General)

- For decades, community health centers have provided care to everyone, regardless of ability to pay, their immigration status, or their individual circumstances. Our goal is a healthy community and that requires universal access to primary care services.
- We remain committed to providing care to everyone and will fight for policies that ensure community health centers are safe places to receive care and support.
- California has spent decades developing programs that ensure access to care for all Californians, such as the Health for All Kids Act, which allows hundreds of thousands of children from low-income families to enroll in Medi-Cal regardless of their immigration status.

## Immigration Executive Orders

- President Trump's recent executive orders on immigration will have a detrimental impact on community health centers' workforce and the patients who rely on community health clinics.
- The administration's stance on immigration is causing fear of deportation, resulting in patients cancelling their medical appointments and dis-enrolling from programs for which they are legally eligible, putting their health and the health of their community at risk.
- If members of the community, particularly immigrants, are too fearful to access primary care services, it is very likely that there could be an increase reliance on emergency services, which will be devastating to the health and financial wellbeing of local communities.
- Immigration raid fears have become so acute that community health centers are already seeing an increase in behavioral health and mental health conditions (i.e. depression, anxiety, stress, etc.) developing in patients.
- As a health system that is committed to speaking our patients' language, honoring their traditions, and valuing their experience, we rely on healthcare providers and staff who themselves are immigrants or Dreamers (DACA). Any executive order that limits their ability to serve their community will hurt community health centers.
- Nationwide, more than 2 million health care workers — including more than 200,000 nurses — 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. (Politico)
- The Association of American Medical Colleges, which has repeatedly warned of a U.S. doctor shortage, has identified 260 current applicants to residency programs from the seven countries included on the 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.