

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Statement of America's Health Centers Opposing Changes to Public Charge

WASHINGTON, August 12, 2019 —The Administration has released the final regulation that expands the definition of “public charge” and puts the health and well-being of immigrant families at risk. Implementation of the final Public Charge rule will start 60-days after the official release, which is currently scheduled for August 14, 2019.

In response, the undersigned organizations continue to stand united in opposition to the final rule. As representatives of America's health centers and the 29 million patients they serve, we work together to ensure access to quality and affordable health care for all in need, regardless of immigration status. The health center model and mission is to ensure access to affordable health care so that all individuals can contribute to their communities and reach their full potential. The final Public Charge rule is in direct contrast to this mission of America's health centers.

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

"This rule is yet another assault on our country's values and immigrants who contribute positively to our communities every day. Regardless of the rule's direct application, it will harm all immigrants and their U.S. citizen family members who are already fearful because of hateful language and weakening of immigrant protections by this administration. AAPCHO and our member health centers are founded on ensuring that our communities have better access to affordable, high quality, and culturally and linguistically proficient health care. This rule makes it harder for those who need care the most to receive it, leading to worse health outcomes. AAPCHO and our member health centers condemn this rule and the negative consequences it will have on Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and all immigrants."

- Jeffrey Caballero, Executive Director, Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

California Primary Care Association

"The changes to the public charge doctrine are deterring immigrants from accessing health care and other essential public programs, including Medicaid. This is unjust and cruel treatment for immigrants seeking a legal pathway to citizenship and it will have a ripple effect across all of California's communities. Make no mistake, policies that punish people for receiving public services impact us all. Health centers pledge to stand with our immigrant communities, and we reaffirm our commitment to valuing and protecting the health rights of our immigrant patients. Health centers will continue the long tradition of being a safe place for everyone to receive care. I urge our state and federal representatives to strongly support our immigrant community during this challenging time. We cannot lose all of the progress California has made to become a more inclusive state."

- Carmela Castellano-Garcia, President and CEO, California Primary Care Association

National Association of Community Health Centers

"The Health Center mission is to treat the underserved so they can access the high-quality, affordable health care they need. Access to affordable health care provides the medically underserved with the opportunity to contribute to their communities, thrive and reach their full potential. The rule will deter individuals, including those seen at health centers, from addressing their health care needs, ultimately leading to worse health outcomes for them and their communities. As patient-centered organizations, by mission we seek to provide appropriate and meaningful access to care for all those who come through our doors, and fear that this rule works in contrast to this longstanding goal."

- Tom Van Coverden, President and CEO, National Association of Community Health Centers

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