



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health Care Providers Meet with Trump Administration to Decry Proposal Intended to Scare Immigrants Away from Health Care

WASHINGTON – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) issued the following statement directly after meeting with Trump administration officials today, along with other community health center leaders, to denounce the negative health and financial consequences of a draft proposal that would deny U.S. residency (green cards) to lawfully-present immigrants if they or their family members use Medicaid, health insurance subsidies, and other health and food programs. The proposed regulation would pose significant economic impact, and force families to choose between health care and keeping their families together.

“This disastrous policy places AAPCHO members’ 5,100 physicians, nurses and staff in the troubling moral dilemma of having to tell parents either to ‘bring your sick child in for treatment’ or advising them that something as basic as getting a clinic visit for their child could result in their family possibly being torn apart,” said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director of AAPCHO.

AAPCHO, with members Asian Health Services and ASIA-International Community Health Center, and the California Primary Care Association, met with the Office of Management and Budget today to argue against the proposed Inadmissibility and Deportability on Public Charge Grounds rule (RIN 1615-AA22). Under the so-called “public charge” proposal still pending and not yet in effect, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services could choose to reject green card applications and deport immigrants if family members—including U.S. born children—use Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or a number of other critical services and programs.

“My health center sees mostly refugees and immigrants. Families are terrified for their children,” said Michael Byun, CEO of ASIA-International Community Health Center in Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. “We have calculated that Ohio could lose up to \$78 million if this rule is enacted. That amounts to thousands of families who will be affected.”

AAPCHO’s 33 member health centers, that serve communities with high concentrations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) living at poverty levels, anticipate that more than 80,000 patients would avoid services at health centers if the proposed rule is carried out. Families may instead risk waiting for an emergency situation or forgoe health care altogether. AAPCHO health centers alone would lose more than \$64 million in Medicaid funds as a result of the administration’s public charge proposal. Additionally, the 14 states where AAPCHO health centers are located could lose up to \$3.5 billion in Medicaid funding.

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"When thinking about AAPI immigrants, many people including policymakers often have an incomplete picture of this diverse population and its contributions to our society," Caballero added. "Limiting one's view to 'Silicon Valley types' for example, does not take into consideration the low-income restaurant employee, nail salon worker, or small business owner without health insurance coverage, who also contribute to our economy and help our communities thrive. We are meeting with OMB to ensure the disproportionate impact of this policy on all AAPI immigrants, their families, and our member centers are not overlooked when calculating the economic impact of this proposed regulation."

Public charge is a bureaucratic term used in immigration law. Currently, public charge refers to those receiving cash assistance (e.g., TANF, SSI) or publicly-funded long-term care. The Trump administration's proposal would broaden the definition of public charge to include almost all public programs, including Medicaid, posing dangerous consequences for millions of patients and families served at community health centers.

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit www.aapcho.org.

Contact

Beverly Quintana, (510) 272-9536 x112, bquintana@aapcho.org

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