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FAMILY PHYSICIANS

American Academy
of Pediatrics



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Joint Statement of America's Frontline Physicians Opposing Public Charge Proposal

The Trump Administration has issued a proposed regulation that changes long-standing rules governing how and whether immigrants can be determined to be a "public charge," widens the scope of programs considered by the government in making such a determination; and dramatically lowers the bar for refusing admission or denying individuals green cards or U.S. visas on this basis.

In response, the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, and American Psychiatric Association, collectively representing more than four hundred thousand of America's frontline physicians, issued this statement:

We are united in expressing our deep concern and opposition to the public charge regulation announced yesterday by the Administration. The regulation upends decades of settled policy with regard to public charge and would make it much more likely that lawfully present immigrants could be denied green cards or U.S. visas, or even be deported, merely on the basis of seeking needed health services for them and their family, including those for which they are eligible.

Rather than face that threat, many of the patients served by our members almost certainly will avoid needed care from their trusted providers, jeopardizing their own health and that of their communities. As a result, the proposed regulation not only threatens our patients' health, but as this deferred care leads to more complex medical and public health challenges, will also significantly increase costs to the health care system and U.S. taxpayers. Most important, the order puts a governmental barrier between health care providers and patients and stands in stark contrast to the mission each of our organizations shares: ensuring meaningful access to health care for patients in need.

We urge the Administration to abandon this effort and to work with us to ensure broader access, improved quality, and more affordable care for our patients.

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