

# The public charge rule: What physicians can do to support immigrant health

September 15 2020

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As the U.S. federal government pursues immigration reform, changes to the federal public charge rule have triggered confusion and concerns among patients who are immigrants. Although federal judges temporarily blocked implementation, a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in January 2020 allowed the proposed changes to take effect.

These policy changes have resulted in many legal immigrants and their family members becoming more reluctant to apply for health insurance, food, housing and other benefits for which they are qualified.

Physicians from the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine summarize current knowledge on the public benefits included in the 'public charge' rule and offer suggestions for family physicians to support the health of their immigrant patients and families. The authors conclude that "family physicians can effectively respond to patient and immigrant community concerns about these changes by providing outreach education, access to primary health care, and referrals to legal and social services."

**More information:** Cynthia Haq et al. Immigrant Health and Changes to the Public-Charge Rule: Family Physicians' Response, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2020). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2572](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2572)

Provided by American Academy of Family Physicians

Citation: The public charge rule: What physicians can do to support immigrant health (2020, September 15) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-09-physicians-immigrant-health.html>

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