

FACT SHEET: Immigrants & COVID-19

SEEK TREATMENT! If you are feeling sick, including experiencing COVID-19 symptoms fever, cough, shortness of breath, it is important to seek treatment.

- There is no federal, state, or local law that prevents immigrants, including those who are not lawfully present (or undocumented) from accessing healthcare services.¹ Nor is there any law that prevents healthcare providers from treating individuals without lawful immigration status or prevents health insurance companies from selling health coverage to individuals without immigration status.

The Public Charge Rule does not apply to testing, screening, or treatment of communicable diseases like COVID-19.

- On March 14, 2020, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued an [alert](#) encouraging all individuals, regardless of immigration status, with symptoms that resemble Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (fever, cough, shortness of breath) to seek necessary medical treatment or preventive services.
- A recent [report](#) shows that very few people are both eligible for public benefits and subject to the public charge rule.
- A free [tool](#) from Boundless can help green card applicants assess the risk of denial under the public charge rule.
- Know Your Rights resources concerning the public charge rule can be found at [iAmerica.org](#) and materials from our allies can be found [here](#).

Immigrants and mixed-status families should not forego medical treatment for fear of disclosure of immigration status.

- Health care providers are not required to inquire about immigration status.
- The Healthcare Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) prohibits the disclosure of protected health information (PHI) or patient information without the patient's consent.
- Know Your Rights Materials regarding immigrants' access to health care from our allies at [NILC](#) and [Protecting Immigrant Families](#).

Immigrants and mixed-status families should not avoid going to the doctor for fear of immigration enforcement.

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [guidance](#) states that absent exigent circumstances, immigration enforcement should not take place at "sensitive locations" which include: Medical treatment and health care facilities, such as hospitals, doctors' offices, accredited health clinics, and emergent or urgent care facilities. The ICE Sensitive Locations Memo can be found [here](#).
- The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency has [similar guidance](#) that attempts to limit enforcement at hospitals.

¹ Sonal Ambegaokar, Opportunities for Maximizing Revenue and Access to Care for Immigrant Populations, <file:///H:/Legal%20Dept%20General/Coronavirus/Access%20to%20Care%20for%20Immigrant%20Populations.pdf>

FACT SHEET: Immigrants & COVID-19

- On March 16, 2020, [ICE issued guidance](#) related to COVID-19 restating that ICE does not conduct enforcement operations at medical facilities, “except under extraordinary circumstances.” The ICE guidance provides additional information about COVID-19 and enforcement, check-ins, detention, removal, and other issues.