



AMCHP Issues Statement on Public Charge Draft Proposed Rule

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) issued the following statement in response to news about a draft proposed rule to change the definition of public charge when applying for legal permanent residency in the United States, citing concerns about families' access to health care:

We are deeply concerned about news from the Department of Homeland Security regarding a draft proposed rule titled "Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds." This proposed rule would expand the benefits that would be considered in determining if a person applying for his or her legal permanent residency (also known as a "green card") is likely to become a public charge. As leaders in promoting maternal and child health, we have recently witnessed firsthand an alarming trend of families declining to access health care services they are legally entitled to because of news reports regarding the upcoming rule. Individuals have expressed fear that accessing certain services could jeopardize their or their family members' future immigration processes. We are also particularly concerned about the families which may include children with special health care needs whose parents will be increasingly reluctant to access needed medical care for their children based on the status of the parents even if the children are citizens.

Even though certain programs are not included in the draft proposed rule, we know families have foregone benefits under those programs. An example of one of these critical programs is WIC, which provides crucial nutrition and health support for pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women as well as infants and young children, and enables them to get a healthy start in life. We fear that moving forward with this proposed rule will continue to sow confusion among families and negatively affect their health during especially vulnerable times, such as pregnancy or the birth of a child. We urge the administration to refrain from moving forward with these proposed changes.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Amy Haddad, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, at ahaddad@amchp.org.