

Talking Points

Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Families Act

National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) Message

Consistent with the Jewish value of *kavod ha bri'ot*, dignity for all, NCJW believes that every individual deserves to be healthy and to obtain care with respect and dignity. However, immigrants are forced to navigate a complicated patchwork of care that often forces them to delay, forego, or pay out-of-pocket for basic health services. The Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Families Act (HR____/S), introduced by Reps. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Nanette Barragán (D-CA) in the House and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) in the Senate, removes discriminatory legal barriers denying immigrants access to the health care programs. **Lawmakers must pass this critical legislation to ensure immigrant families receive the health care they need, fostering healthier communities, more equitable health care, and a stronger economy.**

- **Health care is a basic human right.** But, being able to obtain health care, including preventive, routine, and critical health services too often depends on our immigration status. This means immigrant women are particular at risk for harmful health outcomes as they are more likely to be low-income, of reproductive age, and uninsured, which can have lasting consequences for them, their families, and their communities. Every person deserves affordable health care regardless of their status or how long they have been in the United States. **Current policies block immigrant participation in affordable health coverage programs and chill access to care.** Since 1996, immigrants with status as lawful permanent residents have been forced to wait five years before they are eligible to access Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) insurance exchanges. The need for health services does not discriminate based on immigration status and neither should our government.
- **The HEAL for Immigrant Families Act would restore affordable health coverage for immigrants and support access to comprehensive, accessible, and equitable care.** The bill would restore Medicaid and CHIP eligibility to lawfully present immigrants; remove discriminatory Medicare eligibility requirements regarding length of stay in the US for many lawful permanent residents; end the discriminatory exclusion of undocumented immigrants from accessing health insurance coverage on the ACA Health Insurance Exchanges; ensure access to public and affordable health coverage for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA); and create a state plan option to expand Medicaid and CHIP eligibility to immigrants without lawful presence.