

MAKE "OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL" A REALITY

America cannot live up to her commitment of opportunity for all unless we tackle our immigration system in a way that makes sense, promotes responsibility, brings families together and advances the nation's health and security. Access to health care is a critical part of this equation. New reforms should expand and protect access to health care, not restrict it.

PROBLEM

Federal policies create roadblocks for immigrants trying to access health care and health insurance, creating expensive health disparities, shifting costs and putting everyone's health at risk.

SOLUTION

Commonsense immigration policies that respond to America's needs, align with our values of shared responsibility and fairness and promote full integration. Make health care part of the equation.

Congress Should: Make Health Reform a Reality for All

Health reform will help close the gap in coverage by providing affordable new health insurance options for up to 32 million uninsured individuals. But, millions of immigrants are excluded from the law. These exclusions undermine federal and state efforts to cover the uninsured and threaten to increase costs for everyone.

- Allow all immigrants the same opportunity to purchase health coverage in the new Health Insurance Marketplaces. Right now, undocumented immigrants are barred from purchasing coverage in the Marketplaces, even at full price and with their own money.
- Allow young immigrants granted deferred action (commonly known as DREAMers) access to health reform. Everyone benefits when this young, oftentimes healthier population remains insured.

Congress Should: Uphold America's Commitment to the Freely Associated States

Migrants from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau (known as Compact of Free Association or COFA) are barred from essential health programs like Medicaid. This runs counter to America's responsibility to these jurisdictions under long-standing compacts and unfairly shifts the burden for covering these populations to states like Hawaii and the territory of Guam.

- Restore Medicaid eligibility for migrants from these jurisdictions.

Congress Should: End Arbitrary Time Limits that Harm Legal Aspiring Citizens and their Families

Federal laws impose arbitrary time limits for immigrants with legal status, barring them from the same federal health programs they contribute to for five years or more. The result is that low-income aspiring citizens and their children are locked out of programs that are critical to keeping them out of poverty.

- Remove the five year bar for lawfully present immigrants for federal means-tested programs.

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