

FIXING OUR IMMIGRATION SYSTEM: MAKE HEALTH PART OF THE EQUATION

America needs commonsense immigration policies that work for our country and align with our values of shared responsibility, unity and fairness. Making sure that everyone has access to health care must be a central pillar in fixing our immigration system.

Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrants make America a better place every day, paying into the system, creating jobs and employing millions. Yet, America's patchwork of immigration policies separates families, creates barriers to good health and prevents hard-working immigrants from fully contributing to our nation. The choice is clear: we need solutions that respect our American values, keep families together and foster a healthy nation.

Immigrants are the cornerstone of America, but unfair and unequal policies put their health at risk.

- Many young immigrants in college and those serving in our military are barred from accessing the same new affordable options as their citizen counterparts
- Millions of other immigrants won't be able to purchase health plans in the new marketplaces in 2014, even with their own money
- Federal laws impose arbitrary time limits for immigrants who have legal status, barring them from the same federal health programs they contribute to for five years or more
- Migrants from the Pacific jurisdictions of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau are excluded from essential health programs like Medicaid, even though they work and pay taxes just like their citizen counterparts

Health care for all makes moral and economic sense. Health care for all is what America needs for a prosperous future.

- We have a moral obligation to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to grow up healthy, see the doctor when they are sick, and have the chance at reaching their optimal health and well-being
- Controlling costs is important. Offering health coverage to the most people allows everyone to pay in, increasing competition and helping to spread risks and costs across a larger population
- Expanding access to affordable health care and insurance benefits everyone, making preventive care more accessible, lessening the likelihood of expensive emergency room visits and relieving overburdened safety net hospitals and clinics

We can do better. Congress and the administration must work together on solutions that align with our values, that protect our families and communities and put America on the path to a better, healthier future for everyone.

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