

August 7, 2023

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader Jeffries,

We, the undersigned coalition of over 195 reproductive justice, health, and rights, immigrant rights, and civil rights organizations, are united in our commitment to ensure people of all immigration statuses have access to comprehensive health care and coverage so that immigrant families can live with health, dignity, and justice. Congress must eliminate eligibility restrictions and barriers to federal health programs based on immigration status. As an important first step, we call on Congress to enact the Health Equity & Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Families Act of 2023 and reject any efforts to impose new restrictions on immigrant access to benefits.

For decades, federal restrictions have limited immigrant access to comprehensive health coverage and required families to navigate a complicated patchwork of care to meet their needs. This untenable system forces many immigrant families to choose between paying for healthcare and purchasing other necessities like food and shelter. Under current law, many are unable to qualify for Medicare or Medicaid until five years after receiving “green card status”, and undocumented immigrants are completely barred from purchasing health insurance from the marketplaces established by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Legal and policy barriers to federal health programs disproportionately harm immigrants of color, immigrants who are Black, Indigenous, Latina/x, Asian American, and Pacific Islander, LGBTQI+ immigrants, and immigrants with disabilities, and have contributed to persistent inequities in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of health conditions for our communities for far too long.

The HEAL for Immigrant Families Act of 2023 demonstrates this country’s commitment to health equity and access for all who have made the United States their home. HEAL removes the five-year bar in Medicare, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and codifies access to affordable health coverage for recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The bill additionally creates an option for states to elect to expand Medicaid and CHIP eligibility to immigrants without lawful presence who are otherwise eligible. Finally, HEAL removes the unjustifiable exclusion of undocumented immigrants from the ACA’s Health Insurance Exchanges; granting everyone, of every immigration status, eligibility to purchase qualified health insurance coverage, obtain premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions, and enroll in the Basic Health Program, in accordance with existing income eligibility requirements.

We need to do more to ensure that immigrant families are not paying out-of-pocket for basic health care needs and are accessing quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health care. In 2019, immigrants aged 15–49 had three times the uninsured rate of naturalized citizens or people born in the United States, and one in five noncitizens reported having no usual place for routine or preventive care.¹ This inequity is exacerbated for families who are also

¹ Guttmacher Institute, *Immigrants’ Health Insurance: Federal Restrictions Are Harmful for Sexual and Reproductive Health*, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/immigrants-coverage-policy> (May 2021).

living with low-incomes, with a 50 percent uninsured rate among noncitizen immigrants living below the federal poverty line.²

Barriers to affordable health insurance coverage exacerbate the risk of negative sexual, reproductive, and maternal health outcomes, with lasting health and economic consequences for immigrants and their families. A quarter of all children in the United States have an immigrant parent, and studies show that among citizen children, those with at least one noncitizen parent were twice as likely to be uninsured as those with citizen parents.³ Child health is closely linked to that of their parents—children are less likely to be enrolled in health care if their caregivers are ineligible for those same benefits.⁴

Our current policies violate the basic right to health care and undermine public health by intentionally excluding immigrants from accessing public health coverage. Health should not depend on immigration status and every individual deserves to be healthy and to obtain health care with dignity, regardless of how long they have been in the United States or the status they have been granted. We call on Congress to advance health coverage that immigrants and their families need and deserve – starting by enacting the HEAL for Immigrant Families Act and ensuring that no new eligibility restrictions are imposed on immigrant access to health care and coverage.

For more information, please visit www.napawf.org/heal or contact Lucie Arvalo, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice, at lucie@latinainstitute.org or Kristina Doan, National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum, at kdoan@napawf.org.

Sincerely, the undersigned

State Organizations:

Arizona

William E. Morris Institute for Justice

California

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant

Equality California

Inland Equity Community Land Trust

Los Angeles LGBT Center

Oasis Legal Services

RotaCare San Rafael/Bay Area

² Id.

³ Kaiser Family Foundation, *Health Coverage and Care of Immigrants*, <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-and-care-of-immigrants/> (Dec. 2022).

⁴ Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, *Health Coverage for Parents and Caregivers Helps Children*, <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Covering-Parents-v2.pdf> (March 2017).

Colorado

CARE Colorado
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network

Florida

Florida Health Justice Project
The Pride Center at Equality Park

Georgia

Community Resource Corporation (CRC)
Latino Community Fund INC (LCF Georgia)
SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW

Hawaii

Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!

Illinois

Champaign County Health Care Consumers
Midwest Access Coalition

Indiana

Indiana Justice Project

Kansas

El Centro

Kentucky

Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kentucky Voices for Health

Louisiana

Louisiana Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

Maryland

Public Justice Center

Massachusetts

Boston Medical Center
Disability Policy Consortium
MLPB

Minnesota

Land Stewardship Project
Minnesota Nurses Association

Nevada

Asian Community Development Council
Silver State Equality

New Jersey

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

New York

APNA Community Center
Bronx Health REACH/The Institute for Family Health
Chinese-American Planning Council
Housing Works

North Carolina

Pro-Choice North Carolina

Texas

Avow Texas
Frontera Fund
Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
OCA-Greater Houston
Texas Equal Access Fund
Woori Juntos

Washington, D.C.

Farmworker Justice

Washington

Northwest Harvest
Northwest Health Law Advocates (NoHLA)
United Way of King County

National Organizations:

ACA Consumer Advocacy
Abortion Care Network
Advocates for Youth
All* Above All Action Fund
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Humanist Association

American Muslim Health Professionals
American Public Health Association
Apna Ghar, Inc
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)
Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project
ASISTA Immigration Assistance
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Autistic People of Color Fund (APOC)
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Battered Women's Justice Project
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Birth In Color RVA
Caring Across Generations
Catholics for Choice
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Reproductive Rights
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalition on Human Needs
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
CommonSpirit Health
Community Catalyst
Community Change Action
COPAL: Communities Organizing Latinx Power and Action
COVID Survivors for Change
Daya Inc.
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities
Esperanza United (formerly Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network)
Families USA
Family Voices
Fòs Feminista
Futures Without Violence
Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights (GRR!)
Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
Guttmacher Institute
Healthy Teen Network

Hispanic Federation
Ibis Reproductive Health
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
Immigration Equality Action Fund
Immigration Hub
Immigration Law & Justice Network
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Ipas
Justice Action Center
Justice for Migrant Women
Justice in Aging
Justice in Motion
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Laotian American National Alliance
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Lawyering Project
MANA, A National Latina Organization
MomsRising
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Employment Law Project
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National LGBT Cancer Network
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for New Americans
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Oxfam America
Papa Ola Lokahi
People Power United
PFLAG National
PIVOT: The Progressive Vietnamese American Organization
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Institute
Positive Women's Network-USA
Power to Decide
Pregnancy Justice
Protect Our Care
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Reproductive Health Initiative for Telehealth Equity & Solutions, a fiscally sponsored project of the Hopewell Fund
RH Impact: The Collaborative for Equity & Justice
Rhia Ventures
Service Employees International Union, SEIU
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change
Sojourners
South Asian Public Health Association
Southern Poverty Law Center
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
State Innovation Exchange (SiX) Action
The AIDS Institute
The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation
The Cook's Collective
The Forum for Youth Investment
The National Domestic Violence Hotline
The Praxis Project
The Workers Circle
UltraViolet Action
UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism
URGE: Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity
VALOR
Voto Latino
Welcoming America
We Testify
Women of Reform Judaism
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights
Young Invincibles