



STARFIELD SUMMIT

...where primary care research inspires policy and practice

## STARFIELD HEALTH EQUITY SUMMIT ISSUE BRIEF

### Theme: Vulnerable Populations

Title of IGNITE Presentation Topic:

Immigrant Populations in a Nation of Changing Policy

Why This Is an Important Topic to Address (brief description):

The health of both documented and undocumented immigrants has become a topic of public health concern in recent years, and a growing body of research attempts to understand the impact of immigration policy on the well-being of immigrant communities. While the US economy relies on undocumented immigrants for filling the labor needs in a number of occupations, these individuals remain excluded from many public benefits, rights, and resources that could promote their health and the health of their families. Within a federal policy environment that is often exclusionary, states have increasingly played a role in shaping the social and economic factors that affect the health of undocumented immigrants. The topic of immigrant health is especially important to discuss now after the signing of the recent executive orders by President Trump.

What We Think We Know (Bulleted evidence + Seminal references):

Immigrants in the US today (13.5% of US population; 27% of US population when including immigrants & their US-born children; 3.5% of US population that are undocumented) References: 2015 American Community Survey(ACS); 2016 Current Population Survey; 2010-14 ACS Survey

How state policy impacts immigrants

- Inclusive policies: expanding social inclusion beyond federal policy
- Exclusive policies: further restricting benefits, rights, and resources

How states rank in 5 areas that affect health of undocumented (public health and welfare benefits; higher education; labor and employment practices; driver licensing and identification; and the federal enforcement program, Secure Communities)

Reference: Rodriguez, Wallace, Young; *Creating Conditions to Support Healthy People: State Policies that Affect the Health of Undocumented Immigrants and their Families*, 2015

Federal Policy Impact: Benefits and Challenges for the ACA on Community Health Centers serving immigrant populations

Reference: Wallace, Young, Rodríguez, Bonilla, Pourat; *Community Health Centers Play a Critical Role in Caring for the Remaining Uninsured in the ACA Era*, 2016

Impact of 3 Executive Orders on Immigrants (2017)

- Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States (EO 13768)
- Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements (EO 13767)

### Questions for Group Discussion

#### Questions to Address in Group Discussion:

- How can policy action and enforcement at both the state and local level have an influence on the ultimate impact on the health and well-being of undocumented immigrants?
- What are the barriers to immigrant health policy reform and how can they be addressed?
- What effective methods can be put into place to address and challenge the present day policy landscape that will affect immigrant populations?

#### Implications for Action (In Research, Education, Policy, Practice and Organizational and Community Action):

##### State/Local level Policy Areas:

1. Expand laws that actively grant undocumented immigrants' with rights beyond federal standard (such as driver's licenses, access to high education, and access to health care)
2. Buffer impact of federal laws that restrict undocumented immigrants' rights or access to resources via state and local involvement in enforcement, such as limited the use of E-Verify, or limiting cooperation with the Priority Enforcement Program
3. Strengthen laws that are not explicitly immigration-related, but that create a legal or social environment that is more inclusive and beneficial to undocumented immigrants, such as strong labor and employment protections and higher education affordability
4. Explicitly include undocumented immigrants in policies that apply broadly to the population, but in which legal status limits the level or type of benefits available, such as through the SNAP funding formula and workers' compensation statutes.

##### Federal and Other Policies:

1. Wider variety of social welfare policies that provide basic rights
2. Policies specific to health issues and labor issues
3. Admin and implementation support and policies at the state and local levels that promote immigrant integration (such as ESL classes, legal assistance in seeking deferred action or other options for obtaining lawful status, and professional licenses w/out regard to immigration status)
4. Policies that create a climate of acceptance of all immigrants