

Starfield Summit II: Health Equity Summit
Curriculum Toolkit

Immigrant Populations in a Nation of Changing Policy
IGNITE presentation by Michael Rodriguez, MD, MPH

Module by Patrick Huffer, MD

Appropriate Audience: All learners

Related Modules:

- Intersectionality—The Interconnectedness of Class, Gender, Race and other Types of Vulnerability
- Why Rural Matters
- Access to Primary Care is Not Enough: A Health Equity Road Map
- Understanding Health Experiences and Values to Address Social Determinants of Health
- Communities Working Together to Improve Health and Reduce Disparities

Learning Objectives

After participating in this learning module, the participant will be able to:

1. Understand how immigration policy affects the health of immigrants, their children, and the wellbeing of their communities.
2. Recognize ways that state and federal policies create inclusive and/or exclusive environments for immigrant communities and identify specific examples of changes that can be made to improve immigrant health.
3. Recognize the role that primary care clinics provide as points of entry to social services and identify what steps clinics can take to ensure that they are safe spaces for immigrants.

Background

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 wellbeing of immigrant communities. Immigrants, especially immigrant children, are at increased risk for adverse significant physical, emotional, developmental, and economic repercussions. In 2016, there was a record 43.7 million immigrants living in the United States, making up 13.5% of the U.S. population.¹ When including immigrants and their U.S.-born children, the proportion rises to 25%.¹

While the U.S. economy relies on undocumented immigrants (who comprise 3.5% of the U.S. population¹) 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,

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states have increasingly played a role in shaping the social and economic factors that affect the health of undocumented immigrants. It is essential that healthcare providers and clinics protect, to the best of their ability within the law, the safety and privacy of immigrant patients. The topic of immigrant health is especially important in the context of the 2017 signing of Executive Order 13769, debate over the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, and the “zero tolerance” policy leading to the forced separation of minor infants and children from their parents when detained at the border. Facilitators and participants of this module may need to consider for discussion additional policy developments in this especially tumultuous, politicized epoch.

Ignite Video

Please follow the link below to view the full talk given by Michael Rodriguez, MD, MPH (12 min).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUUtRf8e9dw>

Accompanying Slides

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56bb9997746fb9d2b5c70970/t/5949772d36e5d3af64bcc5e1/1497986866287/2.4+Rodriguez+Presentation.pdf>

Questions for Group Discussion

After watching the talk, consider splitting your learners into smaller groups and facilitate discussion on the following questions.

- 1) How can policy action and enforcement at both the state and local levels have an influence on the ultimate impact on the health and wellbeing of undocumented immigrants?
- 2) What are the barriers to immigrant health policy reform and how can they be addressed?
- 3) What effective methods can be put into place to address and challenge the present-day policy landscape that will affect immigrant populations?
- 4) What are some ways that healthcare providers/centers can create safe spaces for immigrants?
- 5) How does local immigration enforcement affect the utilization of health services among immigrants?

Applying an Equity Lens in Professional Practice

As you reflect on the material in this module consider how you will apply it in your professional practice by asking questions based upon the Equity and Empowerment Lens’ 5Ps:

PURPOSE: Propose a specific intervention/practice/policy to promote the health equity of immigrant populations. This politically charged topic necessitates a thoughtful framing of why addressing health equity for immigrant populations helps everyone.

PEOPLE: Who, in the community and in your organization, will be most positively and negatively affected by and concerned with this intervention/practice/policy?

PLACE: Does this intervention/practice/policy account for a person or group's emotional or physical safety?

PROCESS: Will your intervention come into conflict with existing federal/state law? If so, what are ways to address this?

POWER: How does your intervention help give immigrant populations a voice?

For more in depth discussion read and refer to:

- Martinez O, Wu E, Sandfort T, et. al. . Evaluating the impact of immigration policies on health status among undocumented immigrants: A systematic review. *J Immigr Minor Health*. 2015 Jun;17(3):947-70.
 - This systematic review evaluated 40 articles from 1990-2012 studying how immigration policy affects healthcare access and health outcomes. The authors conclude the review with action items for promoting healthcare access for all, eliminating discrimination within the healthcare setting, and changing global policy to protect vulnerable populations.
- Rodríguez MA, Young M, Wallace SP. Creating conditions to support healthy people: State policies that affect the health of undocumented immigrants and their families. UCLA Fielding School of Public Health website. <http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/search/pages/detail.aspx?PubID=1373> Published April 15, 2015. Accessed September 25, 2018..
 - This study examines 5 domains of state public policy: 1) public health and welfare benefits; 2) higher education; 3) labor and employment practices; 4) driver licensing and identification; and 5) the federal enforcement program, Secure Communities. The authors explore how these policies affect the social determinants of health and immigrants' ability to lead healthy lives. Each U.S. state is graded according to the degree of inclusivity/exclusivity its policies foster. The authors identify policies that can be changed to improve the health of undocumented immigrants and their families.
- Rhodes SD, Mann L, Simán FM, et. al. . The impact of local immigration enforcement policies on the health of immigrant hispanics/latinos in the United States. *Am J Public Health*. 2015 Feb;105(2):329-37.
 - This article examines how utilization of prenatal health services among immigrant Hispanics/Latinas in North Carolina are affected by local immigration enforcement policies. Enforcement policies may contribute to delayed prenatal care or inadequate care, and foment perceptions of mistrust, racism, and intentional barriers to healthcare for Hispanic/Latina mothers.
- Wallace SP, Young M, Rodríguez MA, et al; UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Community health centers play a critical role in caring for the remaining uninsured in

the ACA era.

http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/Documents/PDF/2016/FQHC_PB-oct2016.pdf

Published October 2016. Accessed May 11, 2018.

- This policy brief is based on surveys of 31 Community Health Centers (CHCs) located in areas with high concentrations of immigrants and uninsured patients. The report highlights changes CHCs have seen as a result of the policies of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), as well as a list of policy recommendations to improve the current challenges to healthcare access and delivery.
- Why do people migrate? Theories of migration . European Commission website <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/theoriesofmigration2.pdf>. Accessed May 11, 2018.
 - This infographic explains 8 theories of migration as well as the numerous economic, social, cultural, and political factors that often interplay.

Resources for Further Exploration

Macro: In Health Care Transformation

- “Sanctuary” Policies: An Overview . American Immigration Council website. . https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/sanctuary_policies_an_overview.pdf. Published February 2017. Accessed May 11, 2018.
 - The word “sanctuary” is frequently used, often in a politically charged context, without clear consensus on what it actually means. This helpful overview provides definitions and legal ramifications related to this term, as well as evidence on how social and economic parameters are positively affected in communities that have adopted sanctuary policies.
- Waslin M; Immigration Policy Center. The secure communities program: Unanswered questions and continuing concerns. American Immigration Council website.. https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/SComm_Exec_Summary_112911.pdf. Published November 2011. Accessed on May 11, 2018.
- Immigration Policy Center. The 287(g) program: An overview. American Immigration Council website. https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/the_287g_program_an_overview_0.pdf. Published March 2017. Accessed May 11, 2018.
 - Federal policies like the Secure Communities Program and Section 287(g) directly impact immigrants’ sense of safety and consequently their overall health and wellbeing. These overviews provide information on the legal and ethical concerns raised by these two policies.

Meso: In Quality Improvement

- Huerta A. Health Care Centers Can Become Safe Spaces for Immigrant Patients. National Immigration Law Center website. <https://www.nilc.org/news/the-torch/5-25-17/>. Published May 25, 2017. Accessed May 11, 2018.

- The National Immigration Law Center website details ways that clinics and healthcare providers can maintain safety and privacy for immigrant patients, within the scope of existing federal and state laws.

Micro: In Clinical Encounters- Shared Decision Making

- Kugler E; Center for Health and Health Care in Schools. Partnering with parents to support immigrant and refugee children at school. . Robert Wood Johnson Foundation website.
https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2009/rwjf43063.
Published June 2009. Accessed May 11, 2018.
 - This issue brief highlights concrete ways to improve the health of immigrant families and children through empowerment, destigmatization, cultural competency, and mental health outreach within community/school settings.
- MEDI-CAL STORIES .HEALTH4ALL KIDS website.
<https://health4allkids.org/category/medi-cal-stories/>. Accessed on May 11, 2018.
 - These short videos put a personal face on health access issues faced by immigrant children in California.

Words and Concepts Used in this Module that are Defined in the Guidebook

- Community Health Center
- Hispanic
- Immigrant
- Latina/Latino/Latinx
- Refugee/Asylum seeker
- Undocumented Immigrant

References

1. Pew Research Center. Facts on U.S. Immigrants, 2016. <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2017/05/03/facts-on-u-s-immigrants/>. Accessed on May 12, 2018.

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