UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRANT HEALTH IN THE UNITED STATES

By 2065, the number of immigrants is expected to nearly double to 78 million, when one in three Americans will be an immigrant or have immigrant parents. Migration patterns will also change and Asians will replace Hispanics as the largest incoming immigrant population in the country by 2065.

43.3 million immigrants in the U.S.
46.6% nearly half are naturalized citizens

Barriers to Health Care

Immigration status is a major social determinant of health, impacting the type of coverage a person is eligible for. Depending on their status, immigrants may be blocked from public health insurance programs.

35% of noncitizens are uninsured, compared to 8% of naturalized citizens and 7% of native born citizens

| Immigrants who have held qualifying lawful status for less than five years. | Barred from Medicaid and CHIP
Exception: Pregnant women and children in some states |
| Nonqualified immigrants (including from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of Palau) | Permanently barred from Medicaid and CHIP
Exception: state-funded programs |
| Undocumented persons (including DACA) | Barred from non-emergency Medicaid, CHIP and Affordable Care Act marketplaces
Exception: state-funded programs |

Many Immigrant Communities have Complex Health Care Needs

Paradoxically, many immigrants often come to the U.S. healthy, but over time or generations develop poorer health. For example, first-generation adolescents are less likely to report having obesity or asthma, or engaging in risky health behaviors. For some immigrants, however, acculturation leads to deterioration in health indicators. In addition, health may worsen due to barriers accessing coverage and difficulties finding culturally and linguistically accessible providers.

Immigrants Support the Health of the Nation

There are 2.1 million immigrants in the health care industry, or 17 percent of all health care workers. They account for 28 percent of physicians and surgeons and 23.8 percent of nurses and health aids. These health professionals bring needed cultural competency and language skills as the nation continues to diversify.
1 United States Census, American Community Survey 1 year Estimates, 2015.
2 Qualified Immigrants are defined by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. For more information, see: Broder, Tamra et al, Overview of Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs, National Immigration Law Center, December 2015. Available at: https://www.nilc.org/issues/economic-support/overview-immeligfedprograms/