

## Impact of PUBLIC CHARGE ON NEW YORK STATE HEALTH CENTERS and Patients

### Overview: *What is public charge, and what are the proposed changes to public charge?*

- The US Department of Homeland Security assesses individuals seeking admission to the US or applying for a green card to determine if they would be a “public charge.” Public charge refers to any individual who is likely to become “primarily dependent on the government for subsistence, as demonstrated by either the receipt of **public** cash assistance for income maintenance, or institutionalization for long-term care at government expense.” Individuals who are considered a public charge may be denied entry to the US or denied a green card.
- The proposed changes to public charge will expand benefits considered under public charge determination, such as: non-emergency **Medicaid**, “**SNAP**” (also known as “**food stamps**”), **Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy**, and **Section 8 housing assistance**. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and TANF (sometimes referred to as “welfare”) are already considered in public charge determination and will continue to be considered under the proposed changes.
- Use of health center services, including sliding fee scale, and participation in WIC will not be a factor in a public charge determination.

### NYS Health Center Facts

- Health centers serve patients regardless of their immigration status, language spoken, income level, or insurance status.
- NYS health centers serve **2.2 million patients** annually, **59%** of whom are enrolled in Medicaid/CHIP.
- Medicaid & CHIP make up about **53%** of NYS health center revenue.
- About **20%** of NYS Medicaid enrollees live in a family with at least one non-citizen.

### Impacts to NYS Health Centers

- *In one year, NYS health centers could see as many as 95,000 former Medicaid enrollees become uninsured with projected Medicaid revenue losses topping \$100,000,000.*
- An estimated **20%** of NYS residents in families with at least one noncitizen will **disenroll** from Medicaid.
- Over half of NYS health centers that responded to a CHCANYs survey have already reported **an increase in the number of individuals who are eligible but not enrolling** in Medicaid, SNAP, Section 8 Housing, and WIC due to concerns over deportation, inability to attain a green card, or inability to sponsor a loved one to attain legal permanent status.
- Some NYS health centers have already reported that **parents have refused benefits for their citizen children**, fearing for their own ability to gain legal permanent status or the ability for other children in the family to gain legal permanent status.
- NYS health centers have reported that the proposed changes to public charge have stoked fears over accessing Medicaid benefits, leading to:
  - **decreases in early access to prenatal care** among expecting immigrant mothers, and;
  - **decreased medication adherence rates**, including among high need populations (such as individuals with HIV).
- Fears over **deportation** have also led to:
  - **increased behavioral health needs** and corresponding challenges, such as poor performance in school among children and sleep disturbance;
  - **food insecurity, and;**
  - **housing instability.**