

August 26, 2014

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

RE: Restore Health Coverage for DACA Grantees & Ensure Healthcare Access in Expanded Administrative Relief

Dear President Obama:

We are encouraged by this administration's commitment to reforming immigration policies under your existing executive authority in light of Congress's failure to pass immigration reform. We applaud your leadership in working to achieve comprehensive immigration reform, and agree that the time to act has come. In contemplating the expansion of administrative relief, we urge policy reforms that rescind current barriers to affordable health coverage and care for those granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Moreover, we call on the administration to ensure any future administrative relief program treats all persons eligible for relief and work authorization as lawfully present for all purposes, including for the purposes of eligibility for public and affordable health coverage programs.

DACA has transformed the lives of those individuals who, under the program, have been able to stay with their families and more fully contribute to their communities and our nation without the constant threat of deportation. Yet, we are deeply concerned with the restrictions on access to affordable health coverage and care imposed on DACA recipients. Due to this administration's changes to existing federal rules, those who have qualified for DACA are excluded from affordable health insurance options available to others with deferred action. These changes, issued as federal regulations and guidance in August of 2012, generally deny DACA recipients the opportunity to participate in vital health coverage programs their tax dollars support, including federal Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program in about half the states, and the Affordable Care Act.

These federal restrictions are harmful to immigrant families and communities, establish a dangerous precedent, and are costly and counterproductive. The restrictions have caused administrative burdens and have emboldened state lawmakers to discriminate against DACA grantees. Moreover, the restrictions disproportionately harm women and LGBTQ immigrants who are more likely to be denied access to employer-sponsored and private health insurance coverage. Finally, for DACA recipients in need of healthcare, the denial of affordable care and coverage undoubtedly leads to human suffering and diminished health. The changes to existing federal rules to deny healthcare access for those who qualify for DACA have been opposed by a broad coalition of organizations representing civil and human rights, women's health and reproductive justice, children's rights, LGBTQ rights, faith, and healthcare providers and by over 80 members of Congress.¹

Insofar as DACA is looked to as a model for expanded administrative relief, we urge the administration to advance health and opportunity for DACA grantees by ensuring the same access to health coverage as others with deferred action. Under any future administrative relief program, those who are authorized to

¹ Letter to Obama; Reinstate Healthcare to DREAMers. Rep. Barbara Lee. December 28, 2012. Available at <<http://lee.house.gov/newsroom/press-releases/letter-to-obama-reinstate-healthcare-to-dreamers>> Accessed on August 14, 2014.

live and work in the United States should be lawfully present for all purposes, including for the purposes of eligibility for affordable health coverage programs. To continue to restrict immigrants' access to affordable health coverage and care is to undermine values of fairness and opportunity, and this administration's own achievements in expanding access to coverage, lowering healthcare costs, and sustaining the healthcare system for future generations.

We urge your administration to look to recent Congressional legislation as a starting point for healthcare access. H.R. 4240, the Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Women and Families Act, introduced by Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM-01) in March of 2014 and supported by more than 200 national, state, and local groups simplifies an overcomplicated system of laws so that all lawfully present individuals have equitable access to affordable and public health coverage and care. This commonsense legislation puts forward the simple, yet powerful notion that all people should be able to participate in the healthcare programs to which their tax dollars contribute.

We urge humane and bold leadership from this administration to move current health and immigration policies in line with the needs of the 21st century family and economy. We look forward to working with your administration to advance health and opportunity for all. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Advocates for Youth

AFL-CIO

Alliance for a Just Society

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association of University Women

American Civil Liberties Union

American Medical Student Association

American Public Health Association

Anti-Defamation League

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA)

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)

Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities

Center for Community Change

Center for Employment Training

Center for Reproductive Rights

Children's Health Fund

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Community Access National Network (CANN)

Dignity Health

Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement

Farmworker Justice

First Focus
FORGE, Inc.
Forward Together
GetEQUAL Action
Global Justice Institute, Metropolitan Community Churches
Hispanic Federation
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Human Rights Campaign
Immigration Equality Action Fund
Institute for Science and Human Values, Inc
League of United Latin American Citizens
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Metropolitan Community Churches
Ms. Foundation for Women
NAPAFASA
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Employment Law Project
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Minority AIDS Council
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
National Women's Health Network
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Alliance
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Pre-Health Dreamers
Project Inform

Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Health Access Project
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries
The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Transgender Law Center
Union for Reform Judaism
United We Dream
Uri L'Tzedek
Young Invincibles

State & Local Organizations

Arizona

Japanese American Citizens League, Arizona Chapter
NAPAWF Arizona
MESA Public Health Associates

California

ACCESS Women's Health Justice
ACT for Women and Girls
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
California Church IMPACT
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Clinica Msr Oscar A Romero
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)
Guam Communications Network
Korean Community Center of the East Bay
Mountain View Dreamers
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Western Center on Law & Poverty
Asian Law Alliance
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Partnership
Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas en Norteamérica (COFEM)
Korean Resource Center
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Nuestra Casa East Palo Alto
Pacific Islander Cancer Survivors Network
PALABRA Santa Barbara

Public Law Center
South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council
Street Level Health Project
TODEC legal center

Colorado

Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

District of Columbia

Casa Ruby

Georgia

Feminist Women's Health Center
Georgia Rural Urban Summit

Iowa

Coasap

Illinois

AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS Legal Council of Chicago
Campaign for Better Health Care
EverThrive Illinois
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Illinois Public Health Association
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center

Maryland

CASA de Maryland
Equality Maryland
Public Justice Center

Massachusetts

Disability Policy Consortium
Health Care For All - Massachusetts
Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health
The Latino Health Insurance Program, Inc.
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)

Michigan

South Asian American Voices for Impact (SAAVI)

Minnesota

Domestic Abuse Project

Health Access MN
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

New Jersey

New Jersey Citizen Action
Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ

New Mexico

Encuentro NM
Equality New Mexico
Las Vegas, NM AAUW
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
NM Asian Family Center
New Mexico Voices for Children
Southwest Women's Law Center
UNM Dream Team
Young Women United

New York

African Services Committee
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Commission on the Public's Health System
Community Service Society of New York
Empire Justice Center
GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis)
Health Care for All New York
Her Justice
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
New York Legal Assistance Group
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage
Worker Justice Center of NY, Inc.
Korean Community Services

North Carolina

North Carolina Justice Center

Ohio

Church of Our Saviour/La Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador Episcopal
Asian Services In Action
Ohio AAPI Advisory Council

Oregon

Asian Pacific American Community Support and Service Association, APACSA
Oregon Action
Oregon Foundation for Reproductive Health

Oregon Latino Health Coalition
SEIU Local 503

Pennsylvania
Nationalities Service Center
New Voices Pittsburgh

South Carolina
Lowcountry Immigration Coalition

Tennessee
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
Pleasant Hill Community Church, UCC

Texas
Refugio del Rio Grande, Inc.
Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI)

Virginia
Legal Aid Justice Center
VA Coalition for Immigrant Rights

Washington
21 PROGRESS
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Surge Northwest
Washington CAN!

CC: Valerie Bowman Jarrett, Senior Advisor to the President
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Jeh Johnson, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
Alejandro Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security