



# How Does Access to Public Health Benefits Affect Immigrants?

## My Children are US citizens.

Can they use public services and benefits without hurting my immigration status?

Yes

### Your US citizen children can use public health benefits without affecting your status

If your children qualify, these include: Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, cash assistance, nutrition programs, long term hospital care or any other public health program

### No matter what your immigration status is, your US Citizen children can use public benefits

- ✧ You can still apply for residency or citizenship
- ✧ You cannot be deported because your US citizen children used public benefits or services

## My Children are undocumented or have received DACA.

Can they use public services and benefits?

Yes

### Your children can use *some* public benefits

If they qualify, these may include: emergency Medi-Cal, public assistance for vaccines, exams and treatments for communicable diseases, short term rehabilitation services, emergency medical services or other free or low cost health benefits

- ✧ **Caution:** Your children cannot get cash welfare, use long term hospital care or qualify for Healthy Families. If they do, they might have a problem with immigration
- ✧ **DACA recipients** might also qualify for Medi-Cal

## I am undocumented.

Can I use public services and benefits without causing problems for me with immigration?

Yes

### You can use certain benefits

If you qualify, these include: emergency Medi-Cal, prenatal care, breast and cervical cancer treatment, MRMIP (California's pre-existing condition health plan), WIC and AIM.

- ✧ Immigration will not be notified of your status if you apply for these benefits

NO

### You could have problems if you use certain benefits

These include: receiving long term hospital care or living in a nursing home.

- ✧ You could have problems if you decide to apply for residency in the future

**Caution:** You cannot get cash welfare

## I am a permanent resident (I have my green card)

Can I use public health benefits without hurting my immigration status?

**Yes**

### You can receive public health benefits

If you qualify, these may include: Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, PCIP, long term hospital care, or any other government benefit.

- ✧ You will not lose your permanent residency.
- ✧ You can still apply for citizenship.
  - The government cannot deny you citizenship for having received public health benefits for you or your children
- ✧ You can still sponsor a relative.
  - But, you will have to show that you have enough income to support your relative.

**NO**

### You could lose your permanent residency

- ✧ If you leave the US and stay abroad for more than 6 consecutive months after having received long term health care
- ✧ If you lied on a previous application for government benefits
- ✧ In these cases, consult with an immigration lawyer.

## I got my green card through a sponsor.

If I use public health benefits, can the government force my sponsor to pay?

**NO**

### The government cannot force a sponsor to pay for some public benefits

These include: emergency Medi-Cal, public assistance for vaccines, exams and treatments for communicable diseases, short term rehabilitation services, emergency medical services and other free or low cost health benefits

### Your sponsor does not have to pay once you

- ✧ Become a U.S. citizen
- ✧ Leave the U.S. permanently
- ✧ Earn credit for 40 quarters of work history in the U.S. This takes about 10 years (5 years if two spouses earn credit at the same time)

**If your children are U.S. citizens, your sponsor does not have to pay for their benefits**

**Yes**

### The government could force a sponsor to pay for any “means-tested public benefits” you use

These are: Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal (nonemergency), and Healthy Families.

**BUT, up to now California has not yet asked any sponsor to pay**