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

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
**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.

**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.**

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**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

**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

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**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
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