

Submitter: Amy Celichowski
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1570

As a Family Practice Physician Associate in Milwaukie Oregon, I want to voice my support for limiting immigration enforcement in healthcare settings. Although I fully support deporting criminals who are in our country illegally, that is clearly not what is happening with current enforcement by ICE under this administration.

This has an effect not just on our patients but on all staff working in healthcare. We have had to include in our monthly staff meetings what to do and how to manage situations if ICE shows up on our campus. This causes a lot of fear, anxiety and stress to everyone working in our clinic. Working in healthcare is already stressful enough, this is just another added level of profound negativity.

I am deeply concerned how this affects our patients. The fear of leaving their home and being detained by immigration officials, even if our patients are citizens, is real. We have many patients in our clinic who could be targeted by ICE just based on their skin color or perceived immigration status. We have patients with chronic diseases who need to have labs and medications managed. We have pregnant women who need prenatal care, newborns and children who need wellness visits and vaccinations. With the current measles outbreaks in the country, this is critical to the health of children and everyone in the community. We also have employees who are legal citizens but because they are Latino, I fear they will be targeted by ICE when reporting to work.

The fear of leaving home to go to medical appointments is real. We are seeing this across our nation, particularly in cities where ICE has a large presence. If healthcare settings can be spared from enforcement there may still be a fear to leave the home, but at least our campuses can be safe spaces.

Being undocumented in this country is not a federal crime and all human beings deserve to have live saving or life improving medical care, regardless of documentation status. Those of us working in medicine swore an oath to do no harm. We went into this field in order to help people, and the federal government is getting in our way of being able to provide that help.

Our clinics and hospitals should be safe places for our patients and our coworkers. Allowing immigration enforcement, the way it is currently being conducted, does not ensure the safety of anyone in our communities. Thank you for hearing my concerns.