Message from Mitch

The End of the Public Charge Rule

NYC Health + Hospitals was happy to learn last week that the US Department of Justice would stop defending the Trump Administration's public charge policy in a case that was set to go before the Supreme Court. This means a lower court's decision is now in effect and the harmful rule can no longer be applied anywhere in the country. At NYC Health + Hospitals, we are celebrating the end of this damaging and cruel policy that caused immigrant families to avoid seeking essential health care services, access to which is more important than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the rule only applied to a small subset of New Yorkers who are immigrants and officially covered only a small set of public benefits, it instilled fear and confusion throughout immigrant communities and this "chilling effect" could impact immigrant New Yorkers for years to come. Our frontline providers and staff have seen the impact of the public charge rule in action — patients have disenrolled from critical health care and benefits programs for which they are eligible and have avoided seeking essential care. This has likely exacerbated the disproportionate devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic among New Yorkers of color in neighborhoods with large immigrant communities.

As we celebrate the end of the public charge rule, we underscore the message we have repeated throughout these past four years amidst a changing immigration policy landscape: NYC Health + Hospitals has always encouraged all New Yorkers to seek care without fear, and has welcomed all patients at NYC Health + Hospitals, no matter their immigration status or ability to pay. That is our commitment. It will never change.

If your patients have questions about the end of the public charge rule, they should call NYLAG's public charge hotline at (212) 659-6188.

Dr. Mitchell Katz
President and CEO

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