

Talking Points

HEAL for Immigrant Women & Families Act

The National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) Message

Consistent with the Jewish value of *kavod ha bri'ot*, dignity for all, NCJW believes that every individual deserves to be healthy and to obtain care with respect and dignity. However, immigrants are forced to navigate a complicated patchwork of care that often forces them to delay, forego, or pay out-of-pocket for basic health services. The Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Women and Families Act (HR 4701/S 3799) — introduced by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and by Reps. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Deb Haaland (D-NM) — removes discriminatory legal barriers denying immigrants access to the health care programs their tax dollars support. Lawmakers must pass this critical legislation to ensure that immigrant women and families receive the health care they need, fostering healthier communities and a stronger economy.

- **Current policies block immigrant participation in affordable health coverage programs and chill access to care.** Since 1996, immigrants with status as lawful permanent residents have been forced to wait five years before they are eligible to access Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) insurance exchanges. Furthermore, the Trump administration's restrictive immigration rules and inflammatory rhetoric have made it harder for immigrants to access health care while paradoxically predicated successful immigration on obtaining insurance coverage. The need for health services doesn't discriminate based on immigration status and neither should our government.
- **Health access is a basic human right critical for women and families.** Onerous barriers to affordable health insurance disproportionately harm immigrant women, who are the majority of immigrants and more likely to be low-income, of reproductive age, and uninsured. The resulting lack of access to care places immigrant women at increased risk of harmful health outcomes with lasting consequences for them, their families, and our communities. As all are created in the divine image — *b'tselem Elohim* — we cannot allow the denial of basic human rights to jeopardize immigrant health and lives. What's more, access to health care is fundamental to fully participating in society, contributing to a productive workforce, and more effective family planning.
- **The HEAL Act would restore affordable health coverage for immigrants and support access to comprehensive, accessible, and equitable care.** Specifically, the bill would eliminate the five-year waiting period and open enrollment to full-benefit Medicaid and CHIP for all federally authorized immigrants who are otherwise eligible, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. The bill also grants immediate eligibility to purchase insurance on the ACA's exchanges and to obtain tax credits and cost-sharing reductions to all immigrants regardless of documentation or status.