

Access to Reproductive Healthcare for Immigrants



Immigrants encounter multiple oppressions that undermine their reproductive health. Immigrants are often forced to work in industries that are undervalued, underpaid, and dangerous. Women immigrants are exposed to hazards that may harm their reproductive health (such as toxic chemicals that affect nail salon workers and pesticide exposures suffered by farm workers) and put them at increased risk of sexual assault (working in isolated farm fields or private homes). And immigrants increasingly have

been the targets of discriminatory policies fueled by racism and anti-immigrant sentiment. While Surge supports efforts to ensure environmental and social justice for all workers, and to eliminate discrimination, it is also critical to work for immediate and long-term access to reproductive health care for immigrant women. Although national health reform removes certain barriers, it does not achieve uniform access to high quality, comprehensive, culturally sensitive reproductive healthcare for all people. Because current law permits and perpetuates status-based discrimination against immigrants, we must continue to fight for changes to federal immigration and healthcare laws. At the same time, we can help make access to healthcare a reality by working for changes in state and local policies.

OUR PLATFORM FOR TRANSFORMATION URGES ALL STATES TO:

- Implement programs to increase the presence of communities of color in the medical, health, and birth support professions.
- Include representatives of immigrant communities on every state commission, board, and task force charged with healthcare access, provider licensing, and regulating healthcare professions.
- Exercise Medicaid/CHIP options to provide health insurance for more low-income immigrants.
- Create, fund, maintain, and/or restore public health insurance programs that do not exclude participants on the basis of immigration status.
- Mandate language access services and cultural proficiency throughout the healthcare system.
- Promote policies in institutions of higher education and state licensing agencies to require cultural competence training in health professional training programs, and mandate regular annual training for practicing health professionals.
- Mandate comprehensive coverage of reproductive health needs in all publicly funded health insurance programs and exchanges.
- Adopt and protect state mandates for abortion coverage to address abortion restrictions in federal healthcare law.
- Create, fund, maintain, expand and/or restore programs that provide access to healthcare, taking advantage of the new Medicaid expanded eligibility option. These services should be culturally appropriate and must include coverage of over-the-counter contraceptives.



“API communities need greater access to health services to improve the reproductive lives of women in our community. Unfortunately, the trend is heading toward limiting access rather than broadening it to create healthier communities . . . When women are healthy, they are enabled to make positive decisions to help their families and communities.”

- Liezl Tomas Rebugio, NAPAWF-Seattle and Surge Northwest member, International Examiner editorial

THROUGH OUR PLATFORM FOR TRANSFORMATION, WE WILL WORK WITH COMMUNITIES TO

- Raise community voices in reproductive healthcare advocacy.
- Help create health projects that use local resources, knowledge, and community expertise to address reproductive health.
- Combat legislative antipathy to immigrants with state and federal constitutional challenges to mean-spirited, xenophobic legislation.
- Urge healthcare providers and insurers to pursue culturally appropriate care initiatives by partnering with community organizations.

YOU CAN JOIN US! Contact us at (206) 486-6440. For a detailed analysis of legal barriers, policy proposals, and the work of community groups promoting access to reproductive healthcare for immigrants, go to www.surgereprojustice.org.

Surge stands with communities whose bodies, lives, and families have been subject to state and social control. We advance racial and reproductive justice through community engagement, education, and policy advocacy by mobilizing communities.

We envision a world where all communities are free from reproductive oppression, racism, and violence.