

The new public charge rule makes it impossible for immigrants aspiring to become U.S. citizens to apply for social services, like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and medicaid, without serious consequences to their immigration eligibility.

U.S. Citizenship Immigration Services (USCIS) states on their website that, if immigrants are not able to work or attend school due to the health emergency, and they applied for any type social services, they must gather paperwork and submit to the USCIS offices for review and consideration in hopes that it does not count against them ("Public Charge"). These are hard times we are all experiencing, and there is uncertainty and fear among immigrants aspiring to become U.S. citizens.

There needs to be educational resources on this important issue. There is uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding this topic. Workers from the Health Department and Social Workers need to be educated on the public charge rule, so they can educate their clients who are being affected by this rule. Furthermore, individuals will feel more at ease and have a better understanding of the subject. There needs to be easy access to information on this topic that can be understood and clearly outlined. Translation needs to be included for individuals who do not comprehend the English language on all forms of resources.

More information on positive charges also need to be included on the public charge rule. The focus is on what resources individuals are being impacted by, but does not specify any positive outcomes for this new rule according to the USCIS website on the public charge rule. The more education there is out on the community, the better outcomes for the vulnerable population being affected by this. Professionals in the community will have a better understanding of the topic and be educated on this current issue.

I, Maria Prado-Espinosa, work at Catholic Charities, and many immigrants approach us fearfully asking if they can get their monthly food supply from the food pantry. Many of them do not want to ask because of fear we will report to USCIS, since we ask for their names and birthdates. We ask that information for our records only.

The Department of Welfare and Supportive Services' website does not have any information about the public charge rule and how it will affect the applicant. Also, some of the wording at the website is confusing for a non-English speaker for example, "Aliens Exempt from the Non-Citizen Limitation." The application itself has a paragraph about citizenship/immigration status, but nothing about the public charge rule.

The CARES act infused 15.5 billion dollars in SNAP assistance, benefits that many immigrants cannot claim, unless they want to file a ton of paperwork, and run the risk of being denied citizenship because they applied and received SNAP or medicaid.

Budget reduction is hard to do, you all have a hard task to accomplish. Many people are not going to be happy with you because you are cutting into their programs. However, social services is a program that includes a lot of agencies. In these unusual times, more than before, Nevadans are going to be relying on these services. Slashing the budget for social services will negatively affect Nevadans that are in desperate need of those services. Those who are fearful of the Public Charge Rule will suffer due to the budget cuts, but they will have nowhere to turn due to fears of having a negative charge.

Taylor Dixon, Maria Prado-Espinosa, Tanya Castillo Flores

References

Public Charge. (2009, September 3). Retrieved from
<https://www.uscis.gov/greencard/public-charge>

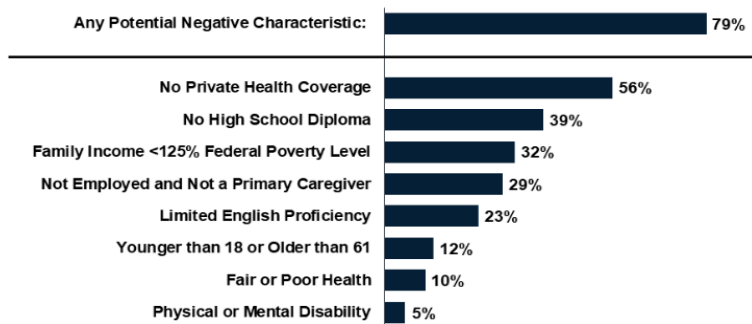
PUBLIC CHARGE FINAL RULE FACT SHEET

TAYLOR DIXON, MARIA PRADO-ESPINOSA, TANYA CASTILLO FLORES

Figure 2

Characteristics of Noncitizens who Originally Entered the U.S. without LPR Status, 2015

Percent of noncitizens who entered the U.S. without LPR status who have certain characteristics that DHS could consider negative in a public charge determination:



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Analysis of Survey of Income and Program Participation 2014 Panel data.



THE PUBLIC CHARGE FINAL RULE FORCES OVER **13 MILLION PEOPLE**, INCLUDING **7.6 MILLION CHILDREN**, TO SUFFER DUE TO LACK OF ACCESS TO THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET.

The Public Charge Final Rule creates fear and anxiety in the country. People are fearful to go to the doctor or get their children checked by medical professionals. The new rule now includes negative charges such as: non-emergency Medicaid for non-pregnant adults, SNAP, TANF, SSI, and several housing programs. This negatively impacts health and financial stability of individuals and families, which in turn contributes to people getting “lost in the system” and lacking adequate health care.

There is ambiguity in the Final Ruling: people cannot figure out what constitutes as a “positive” rule that has the ability to cancel out negative ones.

THERE IS NO LITERATURE ON THE DWSS’S WEBSITE ABOUT THE PUBLIC CHARGE RULE. PEOPLE ARE AFRAID.