



December 30, 2018

Assemblymember Rob Bonta  
State Capitol  
California State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Via fax: (916) 319-2118

**RE: ACR 1 (Bonta) Public Charge**  
**AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Assemblymember Bonta:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 5,000 California pediatricians strongly supports your proposed resolution ACR 1 to condemn proposed changes to federal "public charge" regulations, as they would undermine California's critical safety net programs and the well-being of California communities.

Under current federal policy, "public charge" refers to an individual who is likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence as demonstrated by either (1) the receipt of public cash assistance for income maintenance or (2) institutionalization for long-term care at government expense. The proposed new rule would add food stamps, housing vouchers, Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) and prescriptions for the elderly to the list of services that would be viewed as a public charge.

Expanding the definition of "public charge" in this manner, to include health coverage and food and housing support, would have far-reaching and disastrous effects on the willingness of immigrant families to seek health care coverage for their children and essential support for their families, when needed. Moreover, California pediatricians, child advocacy groups and credible research organizations report that the specter of this harmful change in policy regarding "public charge" is already causing families to refuse to enroll in public health and insurance programs for which their children are eligible now, and for which they would remain eligible even under the new rule.

Below is a Joint Statement joined by the American Academy of Pediatrics in opposition to the revised public charge definition (September 22, 2018).

Pediatrician members of AAP California Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide strongly support ACR 1. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin".

Kris Calvin  
Chief Executive Officer



## American Academy of Pediatrics, California



*The Trump Administration has issued a proposed regulation that changes long-standing rules governing how and whether immigrants can be determined to be a "public charge;" widens the scope of programs considered by the government in making such a determination; and dramatically lowers the bar for refusing admission or denying individuals green cards or U.S. visas on this basis.*

*In response, the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, and American Psychiatric Association, collectively representing more than four hundred thousand of America's frontline physicians, issued this statement:*

We are united in expressing our deep concern and opposition to the public charge regulation announced yesterday by the Administration. The regulation upends decades of settled policy with regard to public charge and would make it much more likely that lawfully present immigrants could be denied green cards or U.S. visas, or even be deported, merely on the basis of seeking needed health services for them and their family, including those for which they are eligible.

Rather than face that threat, many of the patients served by our members almost certainly will avoid needed care from their trusted providers, jeopardizing their own health and that of their communities. As a result, the proposed regulation not only threatens our patients' health, but as this deferred care leads to more complex medical and public health challenges, will also significantly increase costs to the health care system and U.S. taxpayers. Most important, the order puts a governmental barrier between health care providers and patients and stands in stark contrast to the mission each of our organizations shares: ensuring meaningful access to health care for patients in need.

We urge the Administration to abandon this effort and to work with us to ensure broader access, improved quality, and more affordable care for our patients.