



What About Healthcare for Non-Citizen Immigrants?

Labor United for Universal Healthcare strongly believes that everyone in the United States must have access to secure, sustainable, and just healthcare.

That means everybody in, nobody out – no exceptions.

What about the public's health? By denying access to ongoing healthcare to one group of people, we put all of us at risk by increasing the likelihood of the spread of infectious diseases. In Los Angeles, non-citizen – including undocumented – immigrants are a large percentage of our population and our workforce. Although basic labor laws in California cover low-wage, non-citizen, and undocumented workers, they are still at higher risk for work-related injuries and illnesses due to the nature of their jobs. Many work in restaurants, construction, gardening, and garment manufacturing. A large number of unprotected workers also work in our homes, cleaning and taking care of our children and elderly. Good public health practices support the health and wellbeing of everyone in our society.

Can we afford it? Without viable access to regular and preventive healthcare, this population is forced to seek care through the emergency facilities in our hospitals, and then only when serious illness or injury makes it necessary. This is the most expensive care available, and we all pay for it through taxes and higher rates. All workers (including most non-citizen immigrants) pay sales and income taxes, and contribute to Social Security and Medicare. For the most part, however, non-citizen immigrants do not benefit from these programs. Access to preventive and regular healthcare for everyone would save us all a great deal of money and keep us all healthier.

What kind of America do we want? The developed world – outside of the United States – has long recognized healthcare as a basic human right. If we care about ourselves, we need to care about those around us. As long as our healthcare is only for some, not for all, we are falling short of our belief in ourselves as people who care about one another.

Universal healthcare that ensures that everyone in our country has access to a high standard of care is the only way to be certain that we live in a healthy society.

The Affordable Care Act is just a beginning – we need to finish the job! Make healthcare a human right.