

Communicating Effectively in the New Immigration Landscape: *Best Practices for Healthcare and Human Services Teams*



Federal law and public policy regarding immigration is rapidly evolving. Information contained in this document is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or establish an attorney-client relationship. If patients or caregivers have specific questions, they should contact a lawyer or advocate.

1 Avoid documenting people's immigration status

- HIPAA does not protect medical records in all situations
- Documenting that a discussion about immigration happened is different from documenting a person's actual status
- If you must ask the person about immigration status, clearly explain why you are seeking the information

2 Use caution when discussing immigration status with people

- Immigration status matters for access to insurance as well as to many benefits and services
- In the current climate, initiating conversations about immigration status may decrease rapport and increase withdrawal from care
- Reassure people that they remain welcome in your clinic/program, and that you are invested in their health and wellbeing

3 Inevitably some people will withdraw from care or miss appointments

- Keep updated contact information so you can reach out
- Remember people may be facing stressors and situations beyond their control