



## Statement from ICAAP on the Death of a Migrant Child in Chicago

*Statement by Margaret Scotellaro, MD, FAAP, ICAAP Board President*

We were both saddened and outraged by the tragic death of a five-year-old child last week after falling ill at a Pilsen-area migrant shelter. Our hearts go out to the child's family, those who knew and loved him and the entire migrant community. At ICAAP we believe that all children deserve access to prompt, high quality healthcare and a safe living environment. We are committed to ensuring safety and health for all children, including those from migrant families.

There is no doubt that the death of this child was a tragedy. The reality is that migrant shelters in Chicago are currently overcrowded, understaffed, and underfunded leaving them ill equipped to deal with the myriad health concerns — both pre-existing and acute — that affect migrants and their children. More must be done to provide quality, prompt, pediatric healthcare, and members of our provider network are ready to help.

We recognize that City of Chicago health officials are working hard to support the rapidly growing migrant community despite limited resources, but immediate steps must be taken to ensure that children in shelters with urgent medical needs are identified and receive immediate medical treatment by professionals trained in pediatric care. As a Sanctuary City, Chicago must partner closely with the state to devote more resources to ensure the healthcare system and pediatricians are connected to and embedded in the migrant shelters treating children and families.

Specifically, this tragedy must spur city and county health officials to implement:

- A robust system of screening and treatment for children in shelters to ensure urgent medical needs are rapidly identified and treated.
- Shelters should be staffed around-the-clock with qualified pediatric healthcare providers prepared to intervene in future emergency situations.
- Protocols for medical evaluation and more training for non-medical shelter staff on pediatric care to better identify and aid migrants in need of urgent medical treatment. Evidence-based protocols already exist for use in similar congregate care settings.
- Mobile units should be used to provide ongoing care and preventive services such as vaccinations.



- Systems should be established to ensure the linkage of migrant youth to a primary care medical home, subspecialty pediatric services and developmental and behavioral screening.

Throughout our network, we have member pediatricians who see migrant children and families across the city, and we have resources to support pediatricians caring for migrant children in their practices. No child should die because of lack of access to healthcare or a doctor in Chicago, and members of ICAAP are ready to support these children in need. We look forward to working with the city to implement measures to safeguard the well-being of Chicago's newly arrived children and families.

If you are interested in getting involved in ICAAP's Refugee Immigrant Child Health Initiative committee, please contact Abby Creek, Senior Program Manager, Health Equity Initiatives at [acreek@illinoisAAP.com](mailto:acreek@illinoisAAP.com).