

ICAAP's Refugee & Immigrant Child Health Initiative (RICHI)



Welcome to our Inaugural Issue

Spring 2026 brings both urgent action items and meaningful opportunities for Illinois pediatricians working with immigrant and refugee children. This inaugural newsletter from ICAAP's RICHI brings you information about immigrant health, policy updates, upcoming events, and ways to get involved. Quarterly newsletters will be shared covering these topics and more - because as pediatricians, we play an important role in caring for children in immigrant families who face unique health risks, including trauma, developmental challenges, and barriers to care.



VISIT THE UPDATED ICAAP IMMIGRATION WEBPAGE

Redesigned and curated to showcase current clinical tools, multilingual family-facing materials, legal referral resources, and RICHI event information.

illinoisAAP.org/immigration



Policy Update

What Illinois Pediatricians Need to Know This Spring

Federal immigration enforcement activity has intensified across Illinois since early 2026. Pediatricians are seeing downstream effects in their practices: missed well-child visits, families declining specialist referrals, and caregivers expressing fear about presenting at healthcare facilities. These are clinical issues that require clinical responses.

Practice preparedness reminder: Review your clinic's protocol for responding to immigration enforcement activity at or near your facility. The Illinois Alliance for Welcoming Health Care has published guidance on healthcare facility preparedness. View the resource [here](#).

“Families report being afraid to bring their children to medical appointments or even send them to school after seeing immigration agents in hospital parking lots and helicopters hovering over daycare centers and high schools.”

*- Minal Giri, MD, FAAP
RICHI Co-Chair*



Tools for Your Practice

The ICAAP immigration webpage has been updated with these current tools and referral supports, and more. Additional supports — including the NIJC attorney referral list (updated May 2025) and behavioral health referral resources — are available. Selected highlights:

Resource	Description
Immigrant Child Health Toolkit	AAP clinical guidance, screening tools, and anticipatory guidance for children in immigrant families.
CareRef Post-Arrival Screening	Guides clinicians step-by-step through post-arrival medical screening for newly arrived children.
Know Your Rights	Legal resources, family safety planning, housing, food, and mental health available in multiple languages.
Get Covered Illinois	Helps families understand health insurance options and navigate coverage in five languages.

Partner Resources

Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health – Helping Someone in Distress: This pamphlet, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), offers simple, body-based tools to help individuals stay regulated while supporting people impacted by ever-evolving immigration policies, practices, and enforcement.

American Academy of Pediatrics:

- What does immigration detention do to a child’s mind and body? Dr. Sural Shah, chair of the AAP Council on Immigrant Child and Family Health, talked to The Cut about the physical and mental impacts detention can have on children. From anxiety and disrupted development to long-term trauma, Dr. Shah describes how these conditions can shape a child’s health for life. Read more [here](#).
- In a recent AAP Voices blog, Dr. Janna R. Gewirtz O'Brien, a pediatrician in Minnesota, shares her experience treating patients during heightened immigration enforcement activities and gives advice to pediatricians on how to support fearful families. Read the full blog [here](#).

Upcoming Events

RICHI Meetings – Open to all ICAAP members!

- Every third Friday of the month, 12-1 PM

AAP Webinar Civil Surgeon 101: How to Make I-693 Exams Work in Your Practice

- Monday, May 11, 7-8 PM | Registration Link: <https://aap.webex.com/webex/register/r60ad2c28bede5cb384e9e9e902e17a65>

Frameworks for Protecting Immigrant Children's Rights – CME Webinar

- Friday, June 12, 12-1 PM | Register [here](#)

ICAAP Annual Educational Conference

- November 18 & 19, 2026 - Save the date!
- Northern Illinois University – Naperville, IL

Interested in presenting at a future RICHI event or proposing a CME topic? Contact Abby Creek at acreek@illinoisAAP.com.

The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, is accredited by the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics, designates this live conference for a maximum of 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Medical Assistants can submit Certificates of Attendance to their accrediting board to claim credit for participation in the live conference.

Partner Spotlight

Now Recruiting: Pro Bono Civil Surgeon Registry

The Midwest Human Rights Consortium (MHRC) is building a national Pro Bono Civil Surgeon Registry to connect immigrant clients, particularly those with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) or other humanitarian pathways, with physicians willing to perform immigration medical examinations at reduced or no cost. Family medicine and internal medicine physicians are especially needed, as many SIJS clients are now adults. *Are you a designated civil surgeon?*

If you hold USCIS civil surgeon designation and are willing to see pro bono or reduced-fee immigration clients, MHRC invites you to join the registry. Referrals come through a vetted attorney intake process; MHRC handles matching, so you focus on the exam. To sign up or learn more, contact MHRC at minal.giri@midwestasylum.org or visit midwestasylum.org.



READ: RICHI Co-Chair Sue Haverkamp featured in [AAP Article](#) on Immigration

Get Involved: Ways to Engage with RICHI

- Attend a Monthly Meeting

Each month RICHI features guest speakers on relevant topics to immigrant and refugee health.

- Train in Forensic Asylum Evaluations

RICHI connects physicians with training in forensic medical documentation for individuals seeking humanitarian legal protection.

- Join the RICHI Listserv

Stay up to date on RICHI events, advocacy opportunities, and other important information regarding immigration issues.

Is there content you'd like to see from us? Reach out to let us know how we can support you in practice

**RICHI Co-Chairs: Minal Giri, MD, FAAP
and Sue Haverkamp, MD, MPH, FAAP**

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