

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



Welcome to our Summer Issue

As Illinois pediatricians settle into the busy summer season, immigrant and refugee children continue to face new and ongoing threats to their wellbeing. RICHI's Summer newsletter brings you information about immigrant health, policy updates, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.



VISIT ICAAP'S IMMIGRATION WEBPAGE

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

illinoisAAP.org/immigration



Illinois Pediatrician Article on Unaccompanied Immigrant Children

Read the recently published article from RICHI Leaders in the Summer edition of Illinois Pediatrician:

[When Children Wait: What Illinois Pediatricians Need to Know About Unaccompanied Immigrant Children](#)

“These longer stays piled trauma upon their pre-existing trauma (leaving home, taking perilous journeys where they may have been robbed, beaten, raped, forced into labor). While the shelters did their best to provide safe housing, quality medical care, education, and legal advice, there is no doubt that prolonged detention produces deleterious effects in children.”

- Anne Gearhart, MD, FAAP

August RICHI Events

District VI Town Hall - Beyond the Clinic: Supporting Immigrant Communities Amid Ongoing Enforcement August 27, 12-1:30 PM

Hosted by ICAAP and in partnership with these state chapters: Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Pediatricians are increasingly caring for children and families affected by rapidly changing immigration enforcement activity, detention-related fears, family separation concerns, and reduced access to safety-net resources. Join us for shared learning, discussion, and connection, so clinicians can better respond to the needs of immigrant communities during this evolving moment. [Register here](#)

Community Care and Service August 25, 6:30-9:30 PM

Pediatricians and other healthcare providers have witnessed firsthand how increased ICE activity and cruel policies affect children's mental and physical wellbeing. RICHI wants to make space for self-care, connection, and supporting each other. Join us for an evening of community building, hygiene kit packing for those experiencing homelessness, and most importantly, fun! [Register here](#)

Policy Updates

HR 1. Medicaid Eligibility for Noncitizens Changing October 1, 2026

The definition of qualified immigrants eligible for federally funded Medicaid is changing. These changes are required under federal law, are not changes initiated by the State of Illinois, and Illinois state funding should continue to provide health coverage to children who meet state eligibility requirements. Certain groups will also remain eligible for federal Medicaid despite these changes, and those who are affected will be contacted by HFS.



[HFS Noncitizen Toolkit \(Eng/Spn\)](#) | [GetMedicaidFacts.com](#)

Visit [ICAAP's Emerging Issues](#) page to stay up to date on all Medicaid changes.

Public Charge – New Rule Takes Effect September 18, 2026

The Trump Administration has ended protections against bias and discrimination in green card applications. [Protecting Immigrant Families Public Charge Toolkit](#).

“This rule will exacerbate the pervasive fear and uncertainty among immigrant families, and lead to children, including those who are U.S. citizens - not receiving vital health services and supports they need and are eligible for.”

- AAP President Andrew D. Racine, MD, PhD, FAAP | [Read Full AAP Statement](#)

What is Changing?	2022 Rule	Starting September 18, 2026
Who does it apply to?	Family-based green card applicants; green card holders leaving the US 6+ months	No change
Programs considered	Only cash assistance & long-term institutionalization	Many types of benefits, officer discretion
Past benefit use?	Yes, only the two listed above	Yes, the two previously allowed plus many other safety-net programs
Family member's benefit use?	No	Yes. Can count against applicant
Affidavit of support	Required; more likely to "pass"	Required; officers no longer required to consider it as a positive factor
Other factors	Age, income, education, skills, employment, health, affidavit, certain benefits	Same list as prior, but officers now have broad discretion to weigh anything

Fall Webinar Series: Navigating Healthcare Disparities in Specialty Care for Immigrant Children

- Friday, September 18, 12pm:
Session on Hematology
- Friday, October 16, 12pm: Session
on Infectious Diseases

[Register for Webinars Here](#)



RICHI and Reach Out and Read Illinois will be hosting a Holiday Book Club again this year - December 2026. More to come!

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 works with MHRC to connect physicians with training in forensic medical documentation for individuals seeking humanitarian legal protection.
- Be a speaker or propose a webinar topic. We are planning for 2027!

**RICHI Co-Chairs: Minal Giri, MD, FAAP
and Sue Haverkamp, MD, MPH, FAAP**
ICAAP Staff: [Abby Creek, MPH](#)

ILLINOIS CHAPTER

**ICAAP's Annual
Education
Conference**

Bringing together pediatric leaders, clinicians, and advocates from across Illinois to share expertise, elevate best practices, and shape the future of child health care.

**Pre-conference on Autism: Wednesday, Nov. 18
& Conference Day: Thursday, Nov. 19**

Held at Northern Illinois University in Naperville, IL

REGISTER TODAY

illinoisAAP.org/events

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 16 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: Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health

The Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health (CIMH) is seeking speakers for their Nurturing the Roots of Wellness Through Connection, Culture, and Imagination event on Friday, November 13th, at the Chicago Teachers Union. Proposals that are engaging, community-rooted, and accessible, that support learning, connection, healing, imagination, and collective capacity-building will be prioritized. Those with professional expertise, lived experience, community knowledge, and diverse perspectives are encouraged to submit a proposal. Learn more [here](#) and contact [Cindy](#) from CIMH with any questions.