

# Proposed DOJ Public Charge Rule

Impact on Harris County, Texas





# Primary Challenges:

- Immigrants make up 25% of the population of Harris County
  - 1.2 million immigrants reside in Harris County
  - 44% of children have at least one foreign born parent
  - 32% of the workforce are immigrants
- Chilling Effect: As residents disenroll in Federal assistance programs, local governments are challenged with filling the gaps in services
  - The rule discourages immigrant residents from accessing crucial services
  - Costs increase for local governments



# Harris Health System

Harris Health is a “**super**” safety net hospital:

- Provides care to over 300,000 patients per year; \$1.4B budget, with half funded by County
- Approx. 40% of patients are non-U.S. citizens
- Over 80% of patients with subsidized ACA coverage from households of mixed citizenship status

## Costs

- \$95 million in Medicaid and CHIP reimbursements at risk – 60% reduction in collections
- Patients will choose to leave ACA marketplace coverage and become uninsured
- More pressure on overburdened trauma delivery and public hospital systems



# Harris County Public Health

Perceived risk from clients will lead to a decrease in program participation. Decreased use of public health services, including preventative care, will:

- ↑ Reliance on emergency services and safety net hospitals
- ↑ Costs for residents
- ↓ In the number of vaccinations and ↑ disease outbreaks

## Costs

- Women, Infants and Children – \$9 million
- Women's Health & Planning – \$2.5 million
- Lead Hazard Reduction & Control – \$1.8 million



# Harris County – Other impacts

## Housing and homelessness

- The proposed rule includes housing programs → may cause people to disenroll
- Less financial resources → inability to afford rent

## Food insecurity and nutrition

- January 2018–August 2019: SNAP enrollment declined by 14.7 % in Harris County
- 2017-2019: Epiphany Community Health Outreach Services (local nonprofit)
  - 460% increase in food pantry usage