

**Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services
Public Education Subcommittee Final Meeting
September 17th, 2019**

401 S. Clinton Street, Chicago, Illinois
201 S. Grand Avenue East, Springfield, Illinois

Committee Members

Kathy Chan, Cook County Health
Brittany Ward, CPS
Sue Vega, Alivio Medical Center (by phone)
Sergio Obregon, CPS (by phone)
Nadeen Israel, AIDS Foundation of Chicago

HFS Staff

Lynne Thomas
Jane Longo
Elizabeth Nelson
Melissa Black
Jenny Aguirre

Department on Aging

John Eckert (by phone)

IL House of Representatives

Patrick Hostert

Committee Members Absent

John Jansa, Fox Valley Developers
Connie Schiele, HSTP
Sherie Arriazola, Safer Foundation
Erin Weir Lakhmani, Mathematica Policy Research

DHS Staff

Enid Rivera
Gabriela Moroney
Jose Candelas
Patrick Lindstrom
Ngoan Le

Interested Parties

Paula Campbell, IPHCA
Courtney Thompson, Cook County Health
Alicia Donegan, Age Options
Liliana Carrasco, Avesis
Dan Rabbitt, Heartland Alliance
Sam Hollis, IHA
Carrie Chapman, LCHJ
Zsa-Zsa Pimentel, ICIRR
Katie Danko, Lurie Children Hospital
Jessie Beebe, AFC
Graciela Guzman, Healthy Illinois
Michael Gersei, UIC-CHEC
Marilu Morena, ICIRR
Kelsie Landers, EverThrive IL
M Misra, EverThrive IL
Andrea Kovach, Shriver Center
A. Ortega, ERIE Family Center

Interested Parties by Phone

Maria Borrayo, Aunt Martha's Health & Wellness
Rose Dunaway, Girling Community Care Nelson Soltman
Deila Davis, ACCESS Community Health Network
Selma D'Souza

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1. Introductions:

Chairperson Kathy Chan conducted the meeting. Attendees in Chicago and Springfield introduced themselves.

2. Purpose of the Special Meeting:

Kathy Chan opened the meeting indicating that this is a special meeting convened by members of this committee in order to discuss the recently approved Public Charge Rule by the federal Department of Homeland Security <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/08/14/2019-17142/inadmissibility-on-public-charge-grounds>.

Ms. Chan said that the intent is to provide an opportunity for the State to share its plans for communicating with customers and to develop a strategy to coordinate efforts with other stakeholders who are also concerned about the impact of the Public Charge Rule.

3. Review of Message in Final Public Charge Rule:

Andrea Kovach from the Shriver Center on Poverty Law and Carrie Chapman with the Legal Council for Health Justice provided an overview of the Public Charge Rule. The rule is expected to become effective on October 15, 2019. Andrea and Carrie shared details about who will be impacted and possibly excluded by the Rule, along with the benefits and the “totality of circumstances” that will weigh into the decision by US Department of Homeland Security when it determines whether a visa or green card application will be approved. Ms. Kovach said that a good local resource for anyone who has questions about the Rule, is seeking resources, or is in need of training should contact the Protecting Immigrant Families Illinois (PIF-IL) at pifillinois@povertylaw.org

3. Decision about Additional Messages and Messengers:

Gabriela Moroney indicated that DHS is in partnership with HFS and DoA. They are combining efforts to ensure that staff members are trained on the Rule. Staff members are to be equipped with messages to share with clients who may be reluctant to apply for benefits or to disenroll from benefits. These agencies are working closely with the PIF-IL coalition. Recently, Secretary Hou spoke at a press conference denouncing the Final Rule. The DHS Assistant Secretary plans to participate in a Univision digital town hall.

It was stated that messaging needs to take place through trusted community partners. DHS has identified resources to enhance existing immigrant-serving organizations statewide. They can be trained to provide community members with accurate information in response to questions about the Public Charge Rule. They will also provide community education and outreach to ethnic media outlets.

Ngoan Le from the Bureau of Refugee & Immigrant Services at DHS shared documents from the State of Washington’s Office of Refugee and Immigrant Services that Illinois might find useful. This document could help to dispel myths and ensure that individuals make informed choices based on the facts and their individual situations.

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Gabriela Moroney said that DHS is providing training and messaging for the FCRC and ABE Call Center staff members. The goal is to ensure that individuals who come with questions concerning what this Rule means for them, hear the following consistent messages from State staff members:

1. DHS cares about them and understands that they may be experiencing fear and anxiety.
2. Each household is different, and the rule applies differently for each household. It is recommended that people seek assistance through community-based resources.
3. People are encouraged to talk to community expert before making a decision to either not apply for benefits or disenroll from their benefits.

DHS has published a policy memo intended for case worker staff at FCRCs. All DHS caseworkers will receive training, technical assistance, and materials related to the new Rule. <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=118786>

Committee members discussed the need to provide accurate information, as well as guidance to access the appropriate resources. Efforts should be made to avoid alarming people needlessly.

Committee members asked if there is any guarantee that the information they share with the State is safe and will not be used against clients or be shared with immigration authorities. Carrie Chapman will work with HFS and DHS to see what can be said within the context of what the law and rules are today. **Committee members asked if the Governor's Office would issue a document or FAQ.** This would be signed by the directors of the health and human services departments and divisions and would provide legitimacy and a unified message to Illinois residents regarding access to benefits and resources.

It was recommended that individual agencies may also want to modify these messages, as appropriate for the populations with which they work most closely. For any additional questions or concerns, the following are the state contacts:

- DHS - Gabriela Moroney Gabriela.Moroney@Illinois.gov
- HFS - Jenny Aguirre Jenny.Aguirre@Illinois.gov
- DoA - John Eckert at John.Eckert@Illinois.gov

Andrea Kovach said that a number of lawsuits have been filed nationwide by a group of State Attorney Generals, including Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul. Some of the lawsuits could be heard as soon as October 2nd; nearly all are asking for a nationwide injunction to stop the Rule from going into effect on October 15, 2019.

12. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2019, between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.