January 22, 2026*

From the healthcare clinician community to our fellow staff and patients,

Our Associations are committed to ensuring that all Maine patients, regardless of immigration status, have access to safe, timely, high-quality healthcare.

Recent news of increased immigration enforcement actions in Maine is causing fear and concern. Many individuals in our communities are currently afraid to access healthcare, even when they need it. People are also afraid to show up for work, and these individuals are often the backbone of our hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes.

As such, we decided it was important to share the following information so practices and clinicians can understand what federal authorities can and cannot do in health care facilities, so disruptions to healthcare can be mitigated, and everyone's rights and safety are respected.

- **Be Proactive and Prepared:** Create a response team that would be alerted if federal authorities (such as agents from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)) were to come to your healthcare facility, and that has been trained to de-escalate a situation. This should also include training front desk staff on what to do when they enter the waiting room, including who to contact to speak with federal agents.
- **Be Aware of your Rights:** Under current law and practice, agents may enter public areas of a facility, but they must have a signed judicial warrant to enter private, non-public areas (such as treatment rooms or staff-only spaces). You can see an example of a signed judicial warrant here. If they have a signed judicial warrant, you need to comply with its terms. If they have any other document (such as an Administrative Warrant issued by the Department of Homeland Security), you do not need to comply with it. You should politely inform them that they must return with a

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judicial warrant and that they are not permitted to enter the private areas of your facility. Additionally, all healthcare privacy laws still apply, so do not disclose patient information, do not grant access to patient files, and do not discuss whether/when a patient has or had an appointment.

- **Be Calm:** We know this goes without saying, but these encounters can be extremely stressful for everyone involved - from your patients, to your colleagues, to the federal agents. It is important to be the calmest person in the room so that a situation does not escalate.
- **Be Compassionate:** Finally, we want to encourage our membership to be as compassionate to their patients and colleagues as possible. Anxiety and fear can take many forms, including avoidance of primary and emergency care, difficulty managing prescribed medications, substance use, cardiac conditions, and gastrointestinal conditions. Given the potential effects of care avoidance, conducting affirmative outreach to patients who could benefit from support is a bridge toward maintaining health and preventing morbidity and mortality.

We also wanted to share information about the following organizations, which are on the ground here in Maine and are experts in immigration law. We encourage our membership to follow these organizations because they provide up-to-date information.

- Maine Immigrant Resource Hub and Hotline
- ACLU of Maine
    - Know Your Rights Checklist for Healthcare Centers
- Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)

Finally, we wanted to end with the adage in healthcare, "Do No Harm." We would encourage everyone to adopt this mindset, especially as our community faces an increased presence of federal agents.

Please reach out to our Associations with any questions or to discuss ways we can support you.

Maine Medical Association
Maine Academy of Family Physicians
Maine Academy of Physician Associates
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Chapter, American College of Physicians
Maine Dental Association
Maine Dental Hygienists' Association
Maine Nurse Practitioner Association
Maine Occupational Therapy Association
Maine Osteopathic Association
Maine Physical Therapy Association
Maine Psychological Association
Maine Section, American College of Obstectrians & Gynecologists

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