



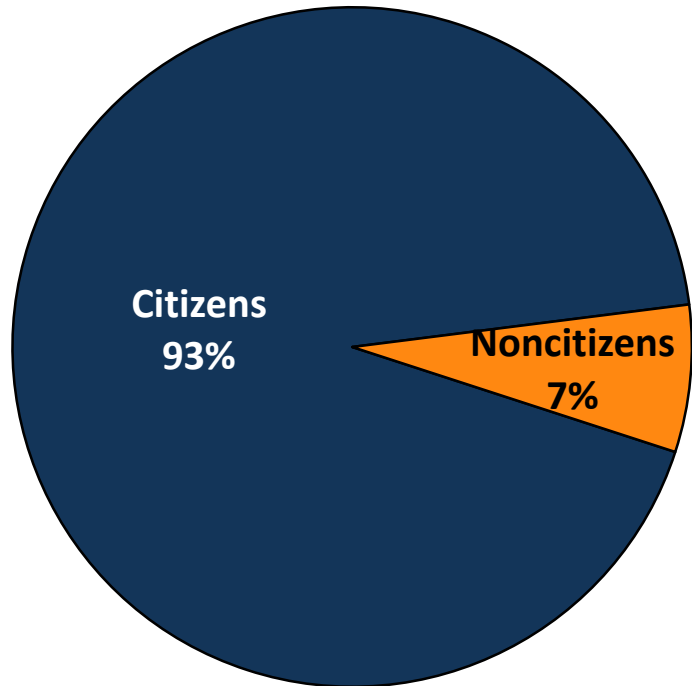
Living in an Immigrant Family in America Today: How Fear and Toxic Stress are Affecting Daily Life, Well-Being, & Health

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Washington, DC
December 13, 2017

Figure 1

Understanding Experiences of Immigrant Families



320.4 Million
Total U.S. Population

Immigrants include a diverse set of individuals who came to the U.S. to seeking safety and improved opportunity for their families

- 23 million noncitizens in the U.S. in 2016
- Include both lawfully present and undocumented immigrants
- Over 12 million children live with a noncitizen parent, and over 10 million of these children are U.S.-born citizens

Conducted focus groups in 5 languages with 100 parents from 15 countries

- Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Farsi, Arabic
- Varied immigration statuses
- 8 cities in four states (IL, CA, MA, MD)
- Blue Shield of California Foundation supported work in CA

13 telephone interviews with pediatricians

- Serving immigrants from around the world
- Practicing in 9 states (AR, CA, DC, IL, MN, NC, PA, TX, VT)

Figure 2

Fears and feelings of uncertainty have increased since the election.

- Families are scared they will be separated from each other due to deportation
- Those with lawful status worry they will lose permission to remain in the U.S.
- Feelings of uncertainty escalated after DACA rescinded
- Children also are feeling fear and uncertainty
- Parents and pediatricians say racism and discrimination, including bullying of children, have increased

“...we wake up every day with the fear of being deported, of the separation of our families, to have to leave the kids.”

Latino Parent, Boston, MA

“Uncomfortable and unstable; we feel that in any moment a new rule could be issued leading to expelling us and sending us back.”

Arabic-speaking Parent,
Anaheim, CA

“They get bullied...told things like, ‘now you and your family will have to leave.’”

Pediatrician, PA

Figure 3

Some families have made changes in their daily lives and routines.

- Limiting time outside the home to essential activities
- Difficulties finding employment
- Concerned about interacting with police/authorities
- Decreased school attendance immediately after election and following raids in a community

“Before, there were many kids in the parks... but now... the kids spend more time inside these days, because we are afraid of being deported.”

Latino Parent, Boston, MA

“My spouse does not go out of the house... The last thing she wants is to get stopped and that they start asking her questions...”

Latino Parent, San Diego, CA

Figure 4

Most parents are continuing to access care for their children and maintain Medicaid/CHIP coverage, but some reported changes in care and enrollment.

- Highly prioritize children's care and trust hospitals and doctors' offices as safe spaces
- Some reports of declines in visits and decreases in participation in Medicaid and CHIP
- Reports of larger decreases in participation in federal nutrition programs (e.g., WIC, SNAP)

"The thing is... if you are at the hospital you are safe. They can't go into a hospital, a school or a church... because it is a sanctuary."

Latino Parent, Chicago, IL

"...they also ask for all your information and ICE will go to your house and that's why you don't apply yet, because they're asking for all the information on all of your spouses, your children."

Latino Parent, San Diego, CA

"What I do have more and more families doing is not taking food stamps, not taking WIC, not wanting to take federal services because they're afraid..."

Pediatrician, VT

Figure 5

Increased fears are affecting the health and well-being of children.

- Children manifesting fears in many ways (behavioral, psychosomatic symptoms, mental health issues)
- Parents and pediatricians worried about effects on school performance
- Pediatricians uniformly concerned about long-term health consequences
 - Toxic stress
 - Growth and development
 - Social and economic factors influencing health

“When you're worried every day that your parents are going to be taken away or that your family will be split up, that really is a form of toxic stress. ...we know that it's going to have long-term implications for heart disease, for health outcomes for these children in adulthood.”

Pediatrician, Minnesota

“A lot of these kids are going to face insecurity regarding housing and food and just basic necessities... So long term, the economic and stability and emotional distress...”

Pediatrician, Illinois

Conclusion

- Immigrants come to the U.S. seeking safety and refuge from war and violence and better opportunities for themselves and their children
- Immigrant families across backgrounds and locations have been affected by the current environment
- Effects extend to those with lawful status
- Fear and toxic stress have short- and long-term consequences for children's health and well-being
- Support for parents and families is key for helping to buffer effects on children