

Addressing Health and Social Needs of Immigrant Families in California: Lessons from Local Responses and Future Priorities

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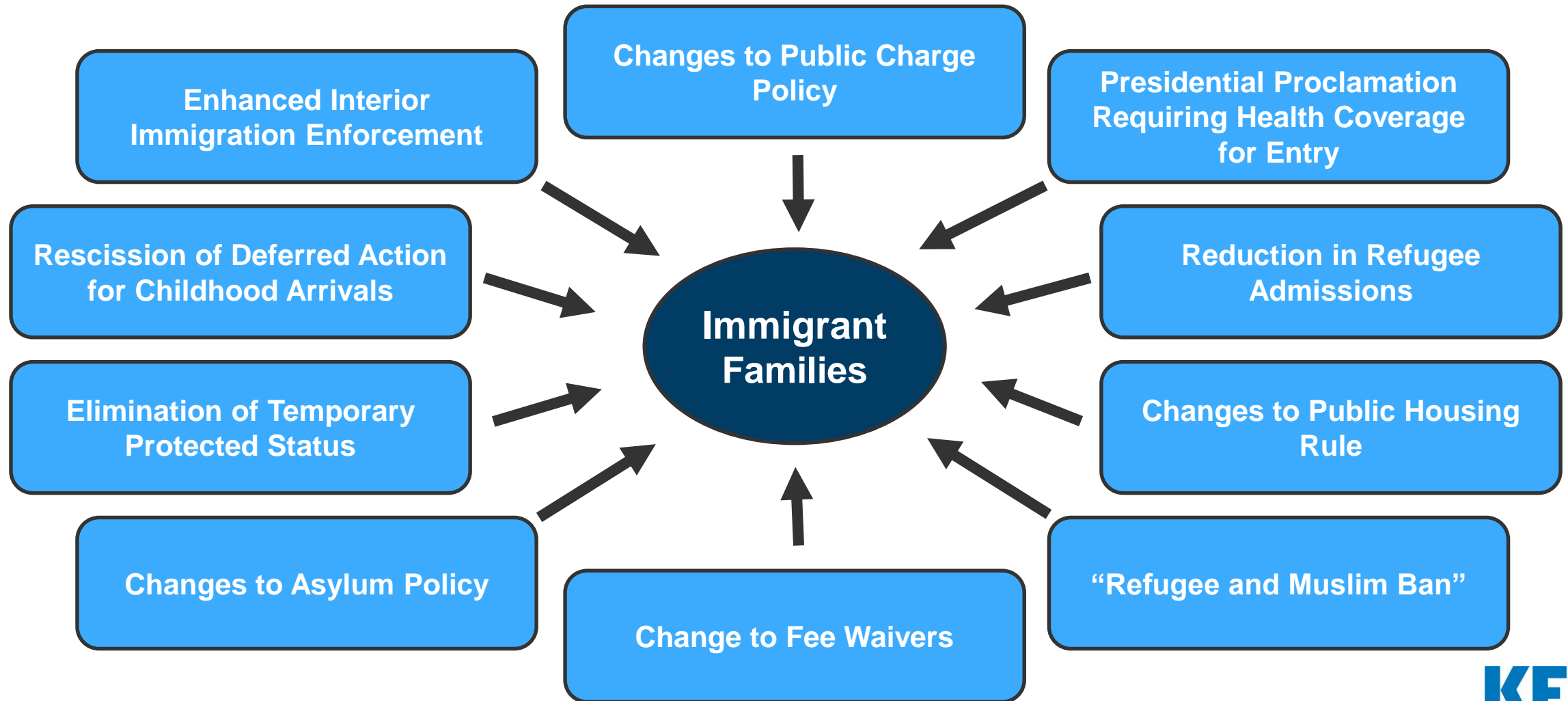
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Figure 1

A broad range of policies are affecting immigrant families.



Understanding Impacts of Shifting Policy Environment through Perspectives of Families and Service Providers

- Discussions and interviews with service providers across sectors (health, legal, and education) and local officials
- Focus groups with parents in immigrant families
- Addressed impacts of shifting environment, local community response, and future priorities
- Conducted during Summer 2019 in San Francisco Bay Area and San Diego
- Supported by Blue Shield of California Foundation

Growing fears and uncertainty are negatively affecting families and increasing pressures on local communities.

- Increased mental health needs among families, including anxiety and depression
- Enhanced economic pressures for families
- Provider concerns about long-term consequences on health and unrealized potential among youth
- Growing pressures on service providers and local communities
- More complexity and uncertainty associated with providing services, especially legal support

“I mean these kids are always fearful, always thinking their parents are going to be deported, constantly in trauma.” Legal Services Provider, San Diego

“The crisis today—we’re going to see the effects from it ten years from now, five years from now.” Health Provider, San Francisco Bay Area

“...what we're seeing is a lot of women are very hesitant to now enroll in medical services...They're getting care here in the very last stages of their pregnancy and...the health of the mom and the child are impacted.” Health Provider, San Diego

“It's a lot of just having to be in crisis mode and reactionary mode that is really not sustainable. Unhealthy for the people affected, unhealthy for the staff...” Community-based Organization, San Diego

Families are decreasing use of programs and services due to fears.

- Families have a range of concerns about enrolling in programs and utilizing services
- Public charge and housing assistance policy changes have amplified fears
- Providers and families report families are disenrolling from and declining to enroll in programs, including Medi-Cal
- Enrollment impacts extend to individuals and programs beyond those affected by policy changes, including citizen children
- Providers are concerned about health and economic impacts of decreased program use

“In my case, when I got WIC some years ago, the situation was different, it wasn’t as intense as now. If I had to request WIC now, I wouldn’t do it.” Parent, San Diego

“...they’re scared to apply for certain much needed funding whether it's Calfresh [food assistance] or its Medi-Cal, to get them the health insurance.” Family Services Provider, San Francisco Bay Area

“...what we're seeing is a lot of women are very hesitant to now enroll in medical services. ...They're getting care here in the very last stages of their pregnancy and...the health of the mom and the child are impacted.” Health Provider, San Diego

Figure 5

Providers have responded to growing needs by strengthening cross-sector relationships and enhancing supports.

- Strengthening existing and developing new partnerships between health and other service providers
- Expanding mental health capacity in other sectors
- Increasing services and supports in schools
- Utilizing trusted individuals and organizations to connect with families
- State and local leadership and policies underpin the community response

“I do think that if it wasn’t for building this cross-sector, multi-disciplinary, multi-agency network...we wouldn’t have been able to do some of the good things that we’ve been able to do.” Legal Services Provider, San Diego

“The other component that we are working with...is really building out mental health services and supports to our schools. ...how do we provide trainings to teachers to identify depression, identify anxiety and how do we react and what resources do we have in place?” Educator, San Diego

“I live in California. I can go wherever here, and I feel protected because, thank God, we have people who support us and we are a sanctuary city, and that comforts me.” Parent, Bay Area

Figure 6

Providers identified continued integration and coordination of services and filling gaps in services as future priorities.

- Making cross-sector relationships sustainable over time
- Increasing supply of mental health and legal services providers
- Meeting growing demands on non-profits and local governments
- Maintaining access to health care as families disenroll from Medi-Cal and other programs
- Continuing to educate and inform about policy changes
- Recognizing the role of state and local leaders and philanthropy

“...funding for legal services is critical. Building up the...army of immigration attorneys. ...it's a most complex area of the law, and it's changing by the minute.” Legal Services Provider, San Diego

“...it was all nonprofits and the two community clinics --- responded right away [to meet the needs of migrant families] and they put their mobile units there and provided healthcare consistently. They did it without any funding.” Health Provider, San Diego

“...we've mobilized our informal food safety net, so when a family says they're not as interested in CalFresh, I'll move on to talking about our food bank...So really trying to talk about making it...two lanes instead of one...” Health Provider, Bay Area

Final Takeaways

- Shifting policy and political environment is leading to increased fears and uncertainty that have wide-ranging negative effects on families
- Growing fears and challenges among families are increasing pressures on service providers and local communities
- San Francisco Bay Area and San Diego communities have responded to growing family needs in many ways that center on cross-sector coordination and enhancing services and supports
- Providers view continued strengthening of cross-sector relationships and addressing gaps in services, particularly mental health and legal services, as key priorities
- Providers also pointed to ongoing need for trusted information and education about policy changes
- State and local leaders and philanthropy can play a role in framing public discussion of immigration issues and supporting efforts to address family needs and fill service gaps moving forward
- Providers stressed that outreach and education and efforts to address family and provider needs are key for preventing erosion of California's progress advancing health through its coverage expansions and implementation of its new Medi-Cal expansion to young adults regardless of immigration status

Filling the need for trusted information on national health issues.



Thank you.