



Los Angeles County DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Reaffirms Its Commitment to Provide Care and Protect Client Privacy in Response to Proposed Public Charge Rule Change

On October 10, 2018, the United States Department of Homeland Security published a proposed rule change to existing immigration policies regarding public charge. If adopted, this rule change could have broad and sweeping effects across L.A. County communities and may impact their access and usage of public services, including mental health care.

For comprehensive information, news and resources about the rule change proposal, visit the Los Angeles County Office of Immigrant Affairs' public charge website at <http://oia.lacounty.gov/publiccharge>. The website also provides informational materials in Spanish, Chinese and Korean.

The [proposed rule change](#) could potentially alter the definition of "public charge," someone dependent on government for support, to include those who use non-cash public benefits such as healthcare programs, nutrition assistance or housing subsidies. The rule change could prevent individuals using these benefits from adjusting their immigration statuses. It can also make people wary of accessing public services in fear that it could lead to immigration enforcement.

In response to this proposed rule change, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is reaffirming its commitment to provide mental health services and supportive resources to L.A. County residents, no matter their immigration status. The department is also committed to protecting its clients' privacy, and will not share their medical or personal information – including their immigration status – without permission or reasonable cause.

This is in alignment with Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' [unanimous motion](#) against the proposed rule change, which states that "we have a moral and civic responsibility to every one of our residents, regardless of immigration status, to deliver important public services and benefits that improve their quality of life."

The rule change proposal is currently open for feedback, and the public may [submit comments](#) about the proposal from now until December 10, 2018, 8:59 p.m. Pacific Time.

For news and updates about the proposed public charge rule change and Los Angeles County's response to it, visit <http://oia.lacounty.gov/publiccharge>.