COLORADO
Safety Net Collaborative

Policy Brief

H.R. 1 Immigrant Coverage Changes

Effective October 1, 2026

WHAT CHANGES ON OCTOBER 1

- An estimated 5,000 to 7,000 lawfully present immigrants in Colorado lose Health First Colorado (Medicaid) and CHP+, based on HCPF figures.
- **Losing coverage:** refugees, asylees, humanitarian parolees, people granted withholding of removal, VAWA and trafficking survivors, certain noncitizen American Indians (e.g., born in Canada), and pre-1980 conditional entrants.
- **Keeping coverage:** citizens; green card holders who meet or are exempt from the five-year rule; COFA migrants; certain Cuban and Haitian entrants; children 18 and under; and pregnant people through 12 months postpartum.
- **Still available:** Emergency Medicaid and Reproductive Health Care Services for those who qualify.
- **Marketplace alternative:** people with household income generally between 100% and 400% FPL may qualify for subsidized Connect for Health Colorado coverage for the rest of 2026. On Jan. 1, 2027, most of the affected immigration groups also lose eligibility for federal premium tax credits.
- **Public charge:** new federal rules apply to certain USCIS green card applications filed on or after Sept. 18, 2026, and may allow Medicaid and other means-tested public benefits received on or after that date to be considered as part of the public charge analysis. Refugees, asylees, T and U visa holders, and VAWA self-petitioners remain exempt when adjusting on that basis.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLINICS

- Check Medicaid eligibility at each visit this fall. Patients may not know their coverage ended.
- Ask affected patients whether they received a HCPF notice, and help them apply for Emergency Medicaid or marketplace coverage if appropriate.
- Keep children and pregnant patients enrolled. They remain eligible, and Cover All Coloradans covers those without lawful status.
- Refer patients facing hospital bills to Colorado Hospital Discounted Care.
- Send immigration and public charge questions to an immigration attorney or accredited nonprofit rather than advising.

PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU ARE SEEING

- Are you seeing more uninsured patients, or patients who lost Health First Colorado?
- Are eligible patients, such as citizen children or pregnant patients, dropping coverage or skipping care out of fear?
- What would help most: patient flyers in English and Spanish, referral contacts, or data for advocacy?

Send to Billy at billy@coloradosafetynet.org. Anecdotal stories and numbers both help.

RESOURCES

- **Health First Colorado:** Immigrant eligibility changes | 800-221-3943
- **Connect for Health Colorado:** connectforhealthco.com | 855-752-6749
- **Colorado Hospital Discounted Care:** hcpf.colorado.gov/colorado-hospital-discounted-care
- **Colorado Consumer Health Initiative** (free coverage and billing help): cohealthinitiative.org/need-help | 303-839-1261
- **Immigration legal help:** National Immigration Legal Services Directory