

Strengths and challenges of immigrant families

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The understanding of the challenges facing immigrant health in the United States is vital to maximizing its trajectory towards transformation. As pointed out by Hall and Cuellar (2016), the negative impetus among the immigrant healthcare in the United States is greatly linked to the relationship between the immigration policies and immigration experiences.

Even though the government has passed various legislations aimed to provide affordable health care to its citizens, the socio-political environment, and its effects healthcare service provision remains a troubling affair. This study seeks to examine some of the pieces of evidence of disparities among the immigrants that interfere with their access to quality health care service in the United States of America. Barriers to health care access among the immigrants include unfriendly immigration policies, bureaucracies in the health care system and lack of capital to finance medical bills.

Statement of the Study Problem

Immigrants in the United States are faced with substantial challenges in accessing healthcare, and this has a great toll on their general wellbeing. These challenges can be attributed to the healthcare system. For example, the insurance coverage varies from one state to another, which leads to an intricate insurance scheme in the country. As a result, the government faces a greater challenge to influence uniform reforms at the national level. In spite of the Congress passing the patient and Affordable Care Act (ACA) into law in 2010, the immigrant communities in the country are still not able to access good healthcare services. This implies that the political will is necessary to promote the immigrants' rights in various respects. The country

should implement sound and sustainable immigration policies access essential services in the country.

Immigrant Health and Its Challenges

The negative trajectory to healthcare accessibility by immigrant communities is propelled by the existing harsh policies. For instance, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) impedes many local, state and federal health workers from supporting the undocumented immigrants (Hall ; Cuellar, 2016). Even though was sought as a tool to limit illegal immigration, such restrictions limit the immigrants to access publicly financed health services. Instead of serving the purpose of limiting illegal immigrants, (PRWORA) places deleterious effects on the immigrants' access to publicly funded health care service.

Another matter of concern how the implementation of ACA is possible when Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) obligates the immigrants to meet certain qualifications to be able to access any form of federal assistance. Even if they have a chance to Medicaid benefits, their time to access such is restricted. According to Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996, federal benefits are only limited to five years for the qualified immigrants and refugees.

It is ostensible that the policies governing the healthcare providers in the United States place open restrictions to the immigrant communities.

According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), immigration policies place an impediment to the refugees and immigrants to access health care in the United States. The organization maintains that social

workers, healthcare service providers should be on the lookout to consider these social and legal statutes to deal with the barriers that limit the community wellbeing in the country.

Besides these limiting policies, the immigrant communities are faced with the challenges of discrimination and prejudice whenever they visit any health facility. The problem of racism is still a disturbing matter in the United States. As much as policymakers and theorists try to deal with it, the problem seems to be deeply embedded in some people despite their roles in the society. Some health professionals are always reluctant to attend to patients from other ethnic communities. Also, most of the immigrant families have low income, which affects their ability to pay the hospital bills. Therefore, they face a serious problem when it comes to health care access.

What Has Been Done

Various individuals and organization have made incredible endeavors to address the immigrant health challenges in the United States. For instance, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has been active in calling their members and partners to deal with the policies that affect the immigrant communities (Haidar, 2018). On the same pedestal, the former president Barack Obama in 2014 made public his intention to allow the undocumented immigrants to live in the country without the constant threats of deportation.

He also sought to allow them to access legal employment in different companies and organizations. Due to the numerical strength of the Republicans in the Senate by then, the plan was thwarted and put on hold by

one of the federal district judges in Texas. The argument was that when the plan would be allowed, it would place a strain on the health care system.

Some of the major problems associated with the limited access to health care or lack of insurance coverage and poor political goodwill. Some of the effects of this veracity are lack of knowledge about health, screening, and prevention. There is also poor likelihood to access chronic infection management for the families that do not have health insurance coverage. According to study done by Gushulak, Weekers and MacPherson (2009), positive health care outcome and health care-seeking behavior are greatly associated with the healthcare insurance.

It is important to note that the government has tried to implement the Affordable Care Act, but still, the immigration policies need to be dealt with to attain the best results. This implies that the government and the policymakers must come up with better approaches that guarantee affordable health care for all people indiscriminately. However, experts allude that the U. S. immigration integration policies are the best compared to other countries and is slightly favorable in regards to health policies.

Since the election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States, various organizations concerned with the protection of the immigrants and refugees' rights have issued statements to fight the unfriendly policies. They seek to revoke the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and others that they consider impediments to the immigrants' access to essential public services (Hall ; Cuellar, 2016).

The government has also developed certain measures sought to defend the rights of the foreign-born individuals in the country. One of them is the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS), which is used as a blueprint guide in giving health care service to different populations. This means that immigrants and refugees in the country also commit the government to ensuring proper access to health care service. However, more needs to be done to allow immigrants easy access to health care services.

Potential Challenges

There is an effort to make reforms in the health care service so that all people in the United States can access them. However, it is open that there is poor political goodwill to fast-track such (Kullgren, 2003). When President Obama tried to come up with plans to support the immigrant communities, the plan was thwarted not on the basis of the arguments that were presented, but due to political stands. The members of the Republican Party used their number to defeat the plan in the Congress.

According to experts, the barriers to health service for immigrant communities are vaster. They go beyond the policy, and range between financial incapacities, fear of deportation and discrimination among the health care service providers. For example, within the health care system are external resource constraints, discrimination, the costs of the health care services and many procedures within the system that one has to keep up with. In fact, the bureaucratic procedures within the health care system is not only disadvantageous to immigrants, but to other citizens as well.

On the other hand, there are individual challenges that impede health care access among the immigrants. Some of the individual limitations include communication barriers, fear of deportation, stigma, financial incapacities and lack of knowledge about health care services. Also, at the policy level, immigrants meet difficulties in trying to access health care insurance. The requirement that individuals have to provide their documents to access such insurances is a greater challenge, more so to the undocumented immigrants. Therefore, despite the efforts, the challenges are seriously raging.

Recommendations

The recommendations to address these challenges range from advocacy for policy transformation, more training for the health care providers to better understand their professional roles, more and better insurance options, and extension of the security net. In other words, the government should increase access to all citizens irrespective of their background and status. Also, the government should allow access to state-funded health care or provide subsidized insurance opportunities to all people living in the united states.

Essentially, there is a need for all the stakeholders involved in the matter to take these points with greater interests to guarantee access to affordable health care between both the documented and undocumented immigrants. If allowed to continue on the same pedestal, the United States would end up being a bad example that would be used as a case study for poor immigration health policies.

Conclusion

This study identifies some of the barriers to health care access by the immigrant communities. Some of the identified areas to be addressed include immigrant policies, the bureaucracies within the health care system as well as the expansion of health insurance options. The United States is celebrated in the world for having friendly blueprints that guide its health care policies.

However, it is also apparent that those policies are not friendly to immigrants living in the country. Even though various stakeholders have tried to generate mitigating measures, there is still need to promote political goodwill for those options to succeed. In spite of the Congress passing the patient and Affordable Care Act (ACA) into law in 2010, the immigrant communities in the country are still not able to access good health care services due to poor political goodwill.

It means that the government and policymakers must hasten their moves in coming up with proper measures to support immigrant health. Just as pointed out in this study, understanding the challenges that face immigrant health in the United States is vital to maximizing its path towards transformation.

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