

# H.B. 112: Prohibit discrimination in local health benefits

Sponsored by Representative Martínez

Access to healthcare is critical to the health of all New Mexicans, but immigrants are excluded from some healthcare programs.

- ▶ Hospitals are supposed to treat all patients, and they receive local, state and federal funds to help cover the healthcare costs for uninsured residents.
- ▶ While most hospitals treat uninsured patients, especially in emergency rooms, some hospital and county financial assistance programs exclude immigrants— including many visa holders.
- ▶ Like all New Mexicans, immigrants contribute to income, property, and sales taxes, which are used to fund healthcare assistance programs. Despite contributing as essential workers, many immigrants do not have access to full healthcare coverage.
- ▶ Discrimination hurts families, children, and essential workers who either are denied care or face insurmountable medical debt, and threatens the health of our entire community.

**The NM Legislature should stop discrimination in state or locally funded health benefits, so all New Mexicans have access to care, regardless of immigration status.**

- Most hospitals and counties are not discriminating in their programs, but some believe federal law prevents them from serving many visa holders, DACA recipients, and residents of varying statuses.
- **However, federal law is not a barrier if states pass an "affirmative law" that makes immigrants eligible for state or local benefits.**
- Passing a state law would ensure all locally and state funded health programs comply with New Mexico's non-discrimination mandates, which already exist in our state constitution.
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**Ending discrimination in healthcare protects all New Mexicans.**

- ▶ Access to healthcare keeps us all healthy. The COVID—19 crisis has shown that when members of our community are sick and untreated, we are all at risk.
- ▶ Providers will be able to provide care in line with their ethical obligations, and would not have to determine immigration statuses—a complex determination that they do not have expertise to do.
- ▶ The hospital and county assistance programs will be simpler and more consistent across the state.

