



September 16, 2019

Kenneth T. Cuccinelli
Acting Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20529

Dear Acting Director Cuccinelli:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our concern with the recent U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) policy change to no longer accept or adjudicate non-military deferred action requests including those for individuals with serious medical conditions. While we welcome the USCIS' September 2, 2019 announcement that it will reopen non-military deferred action cases that were pending on August 7, 2019, we are concerned for others seeking asylum or to immigrate to the U.S. in order to receive life-saving medical treatment. We urge USCIS to reverse this decision immediately and resume consideration of deferred action requests for medical reasons.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 159,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

We have serious concerns about the discontinuation of medical deferred action - which occurred without advance public notice –and the resulting termination of care for children and adults with serious medical conditions who may not be able to receive life-saving treatment elsewhere. This policy change could also force U.S. citizen children with medical conditions to be separated from parents who may be deported even as their children are hospitalized and receiving care. Although USCIS has emphasized that individuals impacted by this change in policy may submit requests to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), it does not appear to be a viable alternative as it is our understanding that ICE offers deferred action to individuals only after they enter deportation proceedings.

We urge USCIS to rescind this policy and resume consideration of deferred action requests for medical reasons. Access to care for critically ill individuals must be prioritized over their immigration status. If you have any questions, please contact Renee Butkus, Director Health Policy at rbutkus@acponline.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert McLean, MD, FACP'.

Robert McLean, MD, FACP

President