



Testimony in Support of HB403

February 11, 2020

HB403: Immigration Enforcement – Public Schools, Hospitals and Courthouses – Policies

Presented To: Honorable Luke Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
On Behalf Of: **Doctors for Camp Closure (D4CC)**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Maryland Chapter of Doctors for Camp Closure (D4CC). D4CC is a national nonpartisan group of over 2000 physicians and health professionals - our Maryland chapter has over 40 members. Our physicians work in a wide array of settings including Johns Hopkins Hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, public health clinics and private medical offices. Our core principle is that immigrants should live in the community and not in detention or prison. Medical evidence has overwhelmingly shown that there is no healthy amount of time for immigrants to be detained. Every major medical association affirms and upholds that principle. Our work and our actions have been profiled in the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, LA Times, Miami Herald, Univision, Telemundo and more.

As healthcare professionals, we understand the critical importance of regular check-ups for preventive care, hospital and clinic visits for long term care, and emergency room visits for emergency care. It is of the utmost importance that every person feels safe to visit a doctor for any of the reasons above – and we are deeply concerned that currently, this is not the case for many of our immigrant families that we treat.

This law would create guidance for ICE entry to hospitals which means that people with cancer can come get treatment without fear of getting deported back to country with little to no medical care, parents can bring their child for a check-up without fear of being separated from the one they are trying to protect, and that family members who got severely injured can come to the emergency room instead of choosing a life of a permanent disability to avoid deportation.

If our patients fear that if they seek care they could risk detention and deportation when visiting a hospital, they will choose to forgo medical care – putting themselves and their family at risk of serious conditions that could have been prevented or treated. Many more common diseases like the measles and the flu, along with their complications can be fatal when not treated. In addition to families being at risk, the general public gets put at risk because those families are not having routine visits to receive vaccines and medicine for certain diseases and conditions.

In conclusion, Doctors for Camp Closure strongly supports legislation that allows for safer access to hospitals and other sensitive locations. We believe that this bill is imperative to the overall health and safety of all people in Maryland.

We appreciate your consideration and respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 403.

Doctors for Camp Closure is a national nonpartisan organization of healthcare professionals that opposes the inhumane detention of immigrants and asylum-seekers in the United States.

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