

2020

Health Justice Plan



AS A CLINICAL NETWORK, we stand with clinicians and the people they serve, to ensure the health and well-being of migrant and vulnerable populations, who are often voiceless and marginalized -- but whose health matters. Improving the health of these oft-overlooked segments of our society provides substantial public health and economic benefits, but it's more than economic sense: it's our ethical duty as clinicians.



WE STRIVE for all people to have quality, affordable, and accessible health care and a safe and healthy workplace. We endeavor to ensure the human rights of people as they move, whether moving across borders or within borders. We seek to call out and eliminate the social determinants of health that reduce stability, increase vulnerability, and lead to mobility in the first place.



IN STRIVING FOR HEALTH EQUITY, we develop practical solutions at the intersection of vulnerability, migration, and health. Our work results in improved health outcomes for the most vulnerable in this country and around the world.

The following outlines MCN's advocacy priorities for 2020 ►



Battling Vulnerability

Outside forces -- disease, war, violence, the climate crisis, environmental degradation, economic and political instability -- push otherwise stable people into positions of vulnerability which lead to mobility. With the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic and recession, many people are battling several of these forces concurrently.

MCN is dedicated to bolstering health centers' ability to: prepare and respond to the health needs of patients during disasters or other destabilizing events, including during and after the COVID-19 pandemic; recognize the root causes of vulnerability in the community, including poverty and mobility, and integrate those factors into care plans; and ensure continuity of care if a patient's instability results in a patient leaving the service area.

Health Access and Migration

Migration should never be an impediment to care. For decades, health access has been MCN's top priority for the most vulnerable. In 2020, health care access remains one of the most critical issues to correct widespread health injustices. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exposed and exacerbated the underlying long-term imbalance of health access. Health care access for vulnerable populations, including basic health services, vaccines, and preventative care, is necessary to adequately address emerging public health crises like COVID-19 and the health consequences of climate change. It is also a human right.

MCN will continue to advance health access for the most vulnerable through Health Network, which provides case management to anyone with health needs that is unable to access the care they need because of migration, or is at risk to be lost to follow-up care. MCN is expanding Health Network's capabilities at the US-Mexico border, serving pregnant asylum seekers and their children through the Humanitarian Care Network. MCN's Medical Review for Immigrants will continue to engage with pro-bono attorneys to assist migrants or asylum seekers in detention with urgent health needs that are not being met in detention. In addition, MCN will continue to advocate for the thousands of migrants who have experienced exposure to COVID-19 or other illnesses, mental distress, and other health issues while being held in detention facilities. MCN provides clinicians with resources and information on the special attention needed for the pre-, peri- and post-migration trauma that migrants may have endured before arriving in our communities.

Support of Clinicians

During these unprecedented times, MCN supports the work of clinicians to ensure their basic needs are met so that they in turn can serve the most vulnerable, who are often left behind during crises. Through our Witness to Witness program, MCN supports the mental health of frontline providers who are themselves experiencing high levels of stress and moral injury as they struggle to provide necessary care to their vulnerable patients. This program is expanding in 2020 as the need grows, with webinars, resources, and one-on-one clinician support. MCN will also continue to provide best practices from health centers that are restructuring in the wake of revenue loss as a result of the COVID-19 crisis while retaining staff to the best of their ability. MCN will further its advocacy work to support outreach services and community mobilization during difficult times.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Extreme weather events, climate change-fueled natural disasters, hotter days, the spread of infectious disease in new regions, and other changing conditions that are directly linked to climate change constitute a public health crisis that impact all people around the world, but the effects of climate change hurt underserved and vulnerable populations the hardest. Those in high-risk jobs face increased heat illness for outdoor workers, lack of access to potable water, and shifts in availability of work. Climate change also increases worldwide displacement, and will be a growing challenge for migration services in the coming years.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

By increasing access to care, removing negative social determinants of health, equipping clinicians to better serve patients, and advocating loudly, MCN seeks to prevent ACEs in migrant children by addressing various issues from preventing chemical exposure in migrant farmworker children, to linking children crossing the border with culturally competent care.

Worker Health and Safety

Through training, resource development and distribution, and advocacy on worker-specific concerns, MCN addresses the needs of workers and advocates for a safe and healthy workplace, including in relation to pesticide exposure and risks for heat-related illnesses.



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