

## Supporting Colorado's New American Families – Position Statement

### **Introduction and Background**

Caring for Colorado Foundation has a long history of promoting health and access to health care services. Our current strategic plan focuses on the broader experience of families and the interrelated factors that impact child and family health both within and outside of the health care system. While we have long recognized that health and well-being are influenced by social factors and access to health care services, we now explicitly express our position that all people living in Colorado, regardless of birthplace or documentation status, have the right to health and well-being. Below, we state our position on new American families, defined as families with any foreign-born family member currently living in the United States, regardless of their documentation status.

### **Alignment with Caring for Colorado Foundation's Purpose, Values and/or Focus Areas**

Caring for Colorado's vision is that Colorado's children and families are happy, healthy and thriving. Our purpose is to create equity in health, well-being and opportunity for Colorado's children and families.

Opportunities for health and well-being are significantly impacted by a family's migration history and their experiences in communities, organizations and systems. We celebrate the hope, optimism and resiliency found in new American families and communities, and we recognize these families as essential to the neighborhoods, culture and economy of our state. We also recognize that new Americans often face discrimination in the United States. Some new American families experience unique stressors related to the conditions that led them to leave their home countries, the journey to the United States and the difficulty of starting a new life away from extended family and familiar culture. Fear of deportation is a significant concern for a subset of new American families, creating conditions in which families may be more vulnerable to physical and mental health issues and children may be more susceptible to experiencing psychological distress and/or disruptions in their development. CFC support will be directed to inclusive programs, policies and systems that build on the strengths of new American families.

### **Caring for Colorado Foundation's Position**

- We recognize the strength and diversity of new American families and the essential roles they play in Colorado's neighborhoods, culture and economy, and we believe a blend of cultures makes our communities stronger and enriches our state.
- We believe all people living in Colorado, regardless of immigration or documentation status, have the right to health and well-being.
- Discrimination is a concern for new American families, and we know that a subset of new American families faces the greatest barriers to health, opportunity and inclusion.

- We recognize that migration decisions and experiences often create stress for new American families, which can be exacerbated by policies and systems that enforce family separation, the fear of separation or a reduction in eligibility for or access to previously committed benefits.
- We oppose policies that make it easier to separate new American families and/or single out and exclude people living Colorado who are new Americans.
- We support policies that protect new American families and ensure that new American children, youth and families have access to the public benefits and services for which they are eligible.
- We seek equity and dignity for all people in our state and support organizations and communities that welcome all people and work together to foster an environment of inclusion and mutual respect.

### **Potential Use of this Statement**

Caring for Colorado supports programs, policies and services that celebrate diversity and foster inclusion and mutual respect for all families, including new American families. We direct our support to programs, services and policies that focus on new American families experiencing the greatest barriers to health, well-being and opportunity. The foundation will recognize this position in public comments and factor this position into decisions to join partnerships and/or collective actions, when weighing in on public policy, when making investment decisions and when developing strategies.

### **References**

American Psychological Association, <https://www.apa.org/advocacy>

Colorado Center on Law & Policy, <https://cclponline.org/>

National Immigration Law Center, <https://www.nilc.org/>

National PTA, <https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/ptas-positions/Individual-Position-Statements/Position-Statement-Services-for-Undocumented-Children>