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Maine Family Planning Denounces Proposed Public Charge Rule Change, September 25th, 2018

As an organization dedicated to supporting women, families, and the right to raise children in a safe and healthy environment, Maine Family Planning stands firmly opposed to proposed new regulations that would allow the government to deny green cards to immigrants who have legally used public benefits including Medicaid, food stamps, or housing assistance.

These harsh rules are undoubtedly a racialized dog-whistle meant to motivate anti-immigrant voters ahead of a critical midterm election, much like the recently announced refugee cap that comes amidst a global refugee crisis. But they also are in keeping with the Trump-Pence administration's anti-poor agenda. By approving draconian Medicaid waivers and seeking to sabotage Title X, the federal family planning program that ensures people can afford birth control and other reproductive healthcare no matter what, this administration has made clear its disdain for *anyone* who struggles to make ends meet.

The cruel proposal, which targets access to food, shelter, and medicine, will drive health crises. The Kaiser Family Foundation has said that changes to long-standing immigration law, like the one put forth this weekend, would likely result in both short- and long-term negative consequences on the health and well-being of millions of children in immigrant families. Indeed, it's likely that this domino effect is already taking place, as growing fear and uncertainty among immigrant families spurs decreased participation in public benefit programs.

That's not family values – that's an attack on families and it's yet another example of right-wingers placing their thumbs on the scale for wealthy Americans while denying immigrants and poor folks a chance at security and stability.

Our values continue to lead us in fighting for a world where everyone can access health care and create the families they envision, in safety and with dignity. The proposed rule will be officially published in the Federal Register in the coming weeks. Once the proposed rule is officially published, there will be a 60-day public comment period. Maine Family Planning will work with our allies in Maine and nationwide to fight this and other salvos against vulnerable communities.