

**Resolution**  
**Of The**  
**Tennessee Public Health Association**  
**Regarding**  
**Health Care for Undocumented Immigrants**

WHEREAS, in 2005, the foreign born population was nearing 36 million, 31% of whom were undocumented; and;

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Pew Hispanic Trust estimated that there were as many as 150,000 illegal immigrants residing in Tennessee and that number is growing; and;

WHEREAS, expectations are that the U.S. population will add 120 million people by 2050, about 80 million of whom are or will be here as the direct or indirect effect of immigration; and;

WHEREAS, immigrants are most likely to be employed in industries that do not offer health insurance coverage, or are unable to access employer-based or private health insurance due to cost; and;

WHEREAS, areas with relatively high uninsured rates are likely to have greater instances of vaccine-preventable diseases, communicable diseases, and disability; and;

WHEREAS, slightly more than half of all TB cases in the U.S. were among foreign-born individuals, a rate that is nearly ten times higher than for U.S.-born cases; and;

WHEREAS, persons born outside of the U.S. comprised about 24.7% of the TB cases in Tennessee; and;

WHEREAS, undocumented immigrant women were more likely to have higher rates of medical complications due to a lack of prenatal care; and;

WHEREAS, epidemiologists have found that every dollar spent on preventive care for undocumented women, including prenatal care with screening for STD's, saves over \$13 and the net savings on each prevented case of fetal HIV saves an estimated \$75,266; and;

WHEREAS, while immigrant children visit the emergency room less often than U.S born children, because they are often sicker when seeking care their emergency room expenditures are more than 3 times higher, suggesting that access to primary and preventive care could have prevented the illness from worsening and ultimately, reduced medical costs;

WHEREAS, local health departments are regularly called upon to provide preventive, primary care, and communicable disease, and population based services to undocumented immigrants and their families with the provision of such services requiring high standards of confidentiality and the removal of inappropriate administrative and policy barriers;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tennessee Public Health Association urges the Tennessee General Assembly to support legislation that allows continued public health, general medical, and primary care services to people without regard to their immigration status.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Commissioner of Health, members of the Tennessee General Assembly, the Tennessee Medical Association, the Tennessee Nurses Association, the Tennessee Hospital Association, the Tennessee Primary Care Association, the Rural Health Association, and that copies of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of this association.

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Glenn Czarnecki  
President

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Doris Spain  
Executive Director

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Karen Lynn  
Chair, Resolution Committee

References:

1. Routine prenatal screening for HIV in a low-prevalence setting, D M Patrick, D M. Money, J Forbes, S R Dobson, M L Rekart, D A Cook, P J Middleton, and D R Burdge
2. J. Passel, Estimates of the Size and Characterization of the Undocumented Population, Pew Hispanic Center, March 21, 2005.
3. Tuberculosis Fact Sheet, 2006.
4. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, April 21, 2006, Vol. 55, No. RR-6.