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Medical Organizations Condemn Arizona's Draconian Immigration Law, SB1070, as an Affront to Human Rights and a Step Backwards for the Health and Well Being of the Nation

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Medical organizations representing more than 61,000 health care providers today released a statement strongly condemning Arizona's new immigration law, SB 1070, which requires law enforcement officials to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally and which criminalizes failure to carry identity documents that legitimize an immigrant's presence in America.

The law, which has been widely criticized by civil rights organizations as opening the floodgates to racial profiling and intimidation tactics, also faces deep opposition from doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals.

“This law sets an abhorrent precedent of government-endorsed racial profiling, discrimination, and intimidation. It has no place in America, an ethnically diverse country founded on principles of freedom, religious tolerance, and equality for all,” says Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, President of the National Physicians Alliance. “Why would undocumented immigrants, or legal immigrants without their papers handy, go to the emergency room or a healthcare center that can be policed? Would undocumented parents of children born in the United States feel safe bringing their children to the doctor, or enrolling them in the health insurance coverage to which they are entitled as citizens? There's a very direct and proven link between fear of being asked for papers and avoiding healthcare.”

The statement asserts that the law foments discrimination, will suppress the rights of legal immigrants and US Citizens in Arizona, and will add significant barriers to health care. It is labeled an “affront to human rights and a devastating step backwards for the health and well being of the nation.” Signatories include: *Asian Health Services Community Health Center (Oakland, CA); Association of Clinicians for the Underserved; National Physicians Alliance; Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU Healthcare; Doctors for Global Health, Board of Directors; Physicians for Human Rights; and the United States Chapter of the International Society for the Psychological Treatments of the Schizophrenias and other Psychoses (ISPS-US).*

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