



# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

*Every physician matters, each patient counts.*

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February 6, 2026

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Neal  
341 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lori Trahan  
2439 Rayburn HOB  
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The Honorable Katherine Clark  
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The Honorable Ayanna Pressley  
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The Honorable William Keating  
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The Honorable Edward Markey 309  
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James McGovern  
438 Cannon HOB  
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The Honorable Jake Auchincloss  
1524 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Seth Moulton  
1127 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Stephen Lynch  
2109 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of over 23,000 physician, resident, and student members of the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS), we thank you for your work and urge you to continue protecting access to health care for our immigrant patients as Congress continues negotiations on funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). **As a condition of ongoing DHS funding, the MMS urges Congress to codify designation of health care facilities as “protected areas” to limit on immigration enforcement actions, and to hold DHS accountable for providing detainees with appropriate medical care, nutrition, and other basic human needs.** With DHS currently funded only through February 13 under a continuing resolution, Congress has a critical and time-limited opportunity to address policies that are harming patients and undermining public health in the Commonwealth and throughout the nation.

DHS policy has [long recognized](#) that limiting enforcement activity in sensitive locations is essential toward ensuring that individuals seek necessary medical care and other basic services without fear. These protections, reflected in DHS’ October 2021 [Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas](#) memorandum, were [rescinded](#) in January 2025. Since that time, physicians and other health care providers [in Massachusetts](#) and across the country have observed

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a troubling ripple effect associated with increased immigration enforcement, with immigrant patients and families skipping medical appointments, postponing or avoiding preventive and life-saving care, disenrolling from limited state-supported health coverage, and facing difficult choices between urgent health needs and fear of detention or deportation.

Nationally, a recent [survey](#) found that 84 percent of health care providers reported moderate or significant decreases in patient visits and more than one-quarter said immigration enforcement was directly affecting patient care. These barriers place patients at risk, worsen health outcomes, and threaten community health, undermining the fundamental principle that health care is a basic human right. We therefore urge reinstatement of these sensible policies to designate health care facilities as sensitive locations, prohibiting enforcement activities thereby protecting the civil rights, safety, and well-being of patients and drawing a clear boundary to protect access to care for immigrant patients.

The MMS also urges Congress to exercise strong and sustained oversight to ensure DHS compliance with existing [detention standards](#), including internal policies on access to medical care and safe, sanitary environments. We are deeply concerned by [ongoing reports](#) suggesting that people in detention facilities are not able to access medically necessary care and are at times experiencing dangerous conditions for extended periods of time. We are especially concerned about the reported measles outbreak at a detention facility in Texas and the public health ramifications if not addressed appropriately. Congressional oversight is essential to prevent further harm and to ensure that individuals in federal custody receive basic medical care consistent with human dignity. In January 2026, the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) [reported](#) that CBP has developed policies intended to guide the provision of medical care to individuals in custody, but also that implementation of those policies has been inconsistent. The MMS encourages Congress to review the GAO's recommendations and to pursue codified medical standards for DHS detention and holding facilities that include robust oversight mechanisms and align, to the greatest extent feasible, with the National Commission on Correctional Healthcare's (NCCHC's) [Standards for Health Services in Jails](#).

The Massachusetts Medical Society stands ready to work with you to advance policies that ensure safe, accessible health care for all, regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Olivia C. Liao, MD, FACS