



# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

*Every physician matters, each patient counts.*

June 5, 2026

REBECCA W. BRENDEL, MD, JD  
*President*

MARY BETH MIOTTO, MD, MPH, FAAP  
*President-Elect*

OLIVIA C. LIAO, MD, FACS  
*Immediate Past President*

LEE S. PERRIN, MD  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

ELI C. FREIMAN, MD, FAAP  
*Speaker*

GRAYSON W. ARMSTRONG, MD, MPH  
*Vice Speaker*

THEODORE A. CALIANOS II, MD, FACS  
*Executive Vice President*  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Dear Members of the Conference Committee:

On behalf of the over 22,000 members of the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS), we thank both the House and Senate for their dedicated work on legislation (H.5316/S.3086) addressing the impact of federal immigration enforcement on Massachusetts communities. We recognize the challenge of crafting policies that protect vulnerable residents, preserve access to essential services, and remain within established legal and constitutional boundaries, and we commend the Legislature's thoughtful and deliberative approach. As you develop a final conference report, we respectfully offer the physician perspective on the importance of ensuring that all Massachusetts residents can seek medical care without fear.

Massachusetts physicians care for patients from every community, regardless of immigration status, background, or circumstance. As the Commonwealth works to address growing concerns surrounding federal immigration enforcement, it is critical that individuals and families continue to feel safe seeking medical care when they need it. When patients delay or avoid care because they fear interactions with immigration authorities, the consequences can be significant, not only for the health of those individuals, but also for the health of our communities.

The MMS has long supported policies that ensure safe access to health care for immigrants and refugees regardless of immigration status. The Society also supports designating health care facilities as sensitive locations, educating providers on the rights of undocumented patients seeking medical care, and encouraging health care facilities to clearly communicate those protections. Additionally, we oppose the presence of immigration enforcement agents in health care settings.

Consistent with our organizational policy framework, we support the provisions in S.3086 that establish protections related to civil immigration enforcement in health care facilities. We believe these provisions would advance an important and longstanding public health objective: ensuring that patients can seek and receive necessary medical care without fear that doing so will expose them to civil immigration enforcement actions.

As physicians, we know firsthand that effective medical care depends on trust. Patients must feel comfortable seeking care, sharing sensitive information, and maintaining ongoing relationships with their health care team. When individuals fear that seeking medical attention could lead to detention or deportation, they may delay or avoid needed care altogether.

Recent national data underscore these concerns. In a 2025 survey of nearly 700 health care workers serving immigrant communities across 30 states, 84 percent reported decreases in patient visits following heightened federal immigration enforcement actions, while nearly half identified fear of

860 WINTER STREET

WALTHAM, MA 02451-1411

TEL (781) 893-4610

TOLL-FREE (800) 322-2303

WWW.MASSMED.ORG

deportation as a significant barrier to accessing care.<sup>1</sup> Respondents reported disruptions in preventive care, chronic disease management, and mental health services, as well as instances of delayed diagnoses and children experiencing significant anxiety related to fears of family separation.<sup>2</sup>

These findings reflect what many physicians in Massachusetts have observed in their own practices. When patients avoid medical facilities out of fear, illnesses go untreated, preventive care is delayed, and health conditions become more serious and costly to address. Such delays can lead to poorer health outcomes for patients and place additional strain on an already challenged health care system

By establishing clear standards regarding civil immigration enforcement in health care settings, these provisions would help preserve that trust and provide greater clarity for patients, physicians, and health care staff. Most importantly, they would help ensure that medical facilities remain focused on their primary mission: caring for patients and protecting public health.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge the conference committee to retain the provisions in S.3086 that establish protections for patients, physicians, and other health care providers in medical settings. Doing so would advance the Commonwealth's longstanding commitment to ensuring that all residents can access medical treatment without fear and would support physicians in fulfilling their ethical obligation to care for patients, regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work on behalf of the residents of Massachusetts. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rebecca W. Brendel, MD, JD

---

<sup>1</sup> Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). Press Release. *ICE Tactics and Deportation Fears Limit Access to Health Care for Children of Immigrants: Survey* <https://phr.org/news/ice-tactics-and-deportation-fears-limit-access-to-health-care-for-children-of-immigrants-survey/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.