

Equitas Health Statement on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

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President Trump and congressional Democrats are at a standstill over the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, a program that currently protects approximately 800,000 eligible undocumented youth, known as “dreamers,” from deportation and provides them with work permits. President Trump is desperately trying to end the program to fulfill his campaign promise to reform immigration, while Democrats work to safeguard DACA. On the line is the possible shutdown of the federal government. Congress faces a deadline to fund the government by Friday, when funding for the federal government is slated to expire. But Democrats want a deal to protect DACA, and argue that Congress must pass legislation by this month to begin processing applications before the Trump administration’s self-imposed March 5 end date for the program.

Revocation of DACA would be a colossal breach in our nation’s progress towards a more equitable and inclusive society. It’s an injustice not only to our fellow community members with DACA status, but to all Americans. This action undermines the common good and stands in profound conflict with our values as a community-based health system and our nation’s history. Ending the DACA program threatens the health and well-being of our neighbors, families, friends, and students. For the more than 36,000 LGBTQ dreamers, DACA has increased employment opportunities, despite inconsistencies in legal protections and economic disparities in the U.S. Now that the order has been rescinded, LGBTQ dreamers are especially vulnerable to discrimination, mistreatment, and hate crimes in the U.S, and in their country of origin.

We are hopeful that a government shutdown can be avoided, and we support efforts to devise a permanent solution for these young people — one that charts a secure pathway toward citizenship and allows these Dreamers to continue to live, work and serve the only country most of them know as home.

Equitas Health stands in solidarity with all of our friends, neighbors, and staff – no matter where they come from – in an unwavering commitment to justice and health for all.