

Health Justice Plan



AS A CLINICAL NETWORK, we stand closely with clinicians and the people they serve, to ensure the health and well-being of migrant, immigrant, and asylum seeking populations, who are often voiceless and marginalized -- but whose health matters. Improving the health of these oft-overlooked segments of our society provides substantial public health and economic benefits, but it's more than economic sense: it's our ethical duty as clinicians.



WE STRIVE for all people to have quality, affordable, and accessible health care and a safe and healthy workplace. We endeavor to assure the human rights of people as they move, whether moving across borders or within borders. We seek to call out and eliminate the stark health inequities and disparities that reduce stability, increase precarity, and lead to mobility in the first place.



IN STRIVING FOR HEALTH EQUITY, we develop practical solutions at the intersection of vulnerability, migration, and health. Our work results in improved health outcomes for the most underserved and in this country and around the world.

The following outlines MCN's health justice priorities.

Battling Vulnerability

Outside forces -- the climate crisis, disease, COVID-19, war, violence, environmental degradation, economic and political instability -- push otherwise stable people into positions of vulnerability which lead to mobility.

Most people who are forced to move are battling several of these forces concurrently. MCN is dedicated to working with clinicians, advocates, and community partners to prepare and

respond to the health needs of patients during disasters or other destabilizing events, including during and after the COVID-19 pandemic; recognize the root causes of vulnerability in the community, including poverty and mobility, and integrate those factors into care plans; and ensure continuity of care if a patient's instability results in a patient leaving the service area.



Asylum Seekers receive care at the Respite Center in McAllen, Texas.

Health Access and Migration

Migration should never be an impediment to care. For decades, health access has been MCN's top priority for the most vulnerable. Health care access remains one of the most critical issues to correct widespread health injustices. The COVID-19 pandemic, war, and climate disasters have only exposed and exacerbated the underlying long-term imbalance of health access. Health care access for vulnerable populations, including basic health services, vaccines, and preventative care, is necessary to adequately address emerging public health crises and the health consequences of climate change. It is also a human right.

MCN will continue to advance health access for the most vulnerable through Health Network, which provides case management to anyone with health needs that is unable to access the care they need because of migration, or is at risk to be lost to follow-up care. MCN has expanded Health Network's capabilities at the US-Mexico border, serving pregnant asylum seekers and their children through the Humanitarian Care Network. MCN's Medical Review for Immigrants will continue to engage with pro-bono attorneys to assist migrants or asylum seekers in detention with urgent health needs that are not being met in detention.

Health and Well-Being of Clinicians

Structural racism, a lack of correctly channeled funding, administrative burdens, overwhelmed systems, poor community integration, and other barriers create moral injury for clinicians. Through our *Witness to Witness* program, MCN provides extensive training, education, and opportunities for peer support for the clinicians who are often overwhelmed and overworked, lacking the resources to do the job they know needs to be done.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Extreme weather events, climate change-fueled natural disasters, heat waves, the spread of infectious disease in new regions, and other changing conditions that are directly linked to climate change constitute a public health crisis that impact all people around the world, but the effects of climate change hurt underserved and precarious populations the hardest. Those in high-risk jobs face increased heat illness for outdoor workers, lack of access to potable water, and shifts in availability of work. Climate change also increases worldwide displacement, and will be a growing challenge for migration services in the coming years.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

By increasing access to care, removing negative social determinants of health, equipping clinicians to better serve patients, and advocating loudly, MCN seeks to prevent ACEs in migrant children by protecting their health by addressing various issues from preventing chemical exposure in migrant farmworker children, to linking children crossing the border with culturally competent care.

Worker Health and Safety

Through training, resource development and distribution, and advocacy on worker-specific concerns, MCN addresses the needs of workers and advocates for a safe and healthy workplace, including in relation to pesticide exposure and risks for heat-related illnesses.



Coalition of Immokalee Workers