

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Community Health Clerkship
Health Advocacy

REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT HEALTH - WORCESTER

Advocacy Organizations	
What are some Local organizations that do advocacy work?	Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, Family Health Center, Great Brook Valley Health Center
What are some State level organizations that do advocacy work?	MIRA, Healthcare for All, MIRACLE Campaign
What are some National level organizations that do advocacy work?	DPH, ORR, USCIS
What are some International organizations that do advocacy work?	WHO, CDC, UNHCR
Advocacy Issue	
Looking at the State, National, and/or International level, at the websites or information from the organizations above, what is a major area of advocacy at this time? <i>Try to choose an advocacy issue that will in some way affect the local community.</i> Advocacy specifically refers to promoting legislation, policies or specific budgetary appropriations that positively affect a health issue. This may occur through decreasing barriers to accessing health services, providing an infrastructure conducive to effective health promotion programs, or directly increasing the resources and infrastructure of the public health system.	The most recent area of federal advocacy presented by MIRA to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, regarded the reinstatement of safety net benefits and continued funding for public health insurance. Thousands of legal immigrants with children no longer qualify for the safety net benefits following the legislative change of the 2002 and 2003 fiscal year budgets. MIRA is advocating for a \$3 million budget to restore these programs. They are requesting the renewal of the \$3.5 million budget for outreach and enrollment grants as part of health reform. ¹
What specific law, policy or appropriation is being advocated for?	Specifically, the current legislation being advocated for is regarding the need to restore the safety net benefits for present legal immigrants and continued funding for public health insurance.
Who is doing the advocating? (Which organizations?)	MIRA, Health Care for All
Who is being lobbied?	The federal government is being lobbied to reform the current Safety Net benefits for legal immigrants and funding for public health insurance.
Whom will this issue affect?	The first advocacy issue affects the immigrants falling below the poverty line, but ineligible for safety net benefits. The general public health care system is affected.
Were they or will they (in your opinion) be successful?	Unfortunately, the reform was not successful at this time, but with continued advocacy and funding, this issue is likely to be successful in the future.
Why or why not? What do they need to be more successful?	The lack of success could be related to political timing, party in power, and post 911 attitudes toward immigration.
What are the consequences if they are not successful?	Thousands of legal immigrants are left without safety net benefits and limited funding for health insurance leading to limited health care.

If they are not successful, what other strategies can be used to achieve the same goal?	Funding from outside sources, political support, and personal testimony could all assist in achieving the goals set forth my MIRA.
How can physicians and/or nurses be involved in this advocacy issue?	Medical professionals can advocate on a policy level by writing to Congress and finding immigrants, refugees, and asylees to give testimony. It has been discovered that personal stories have been a driving force to passing new amendments and policies.

¹ Piwowarczyk, L., Moreno, A., and Grodin, M. (2000). Health Care of Torture Survivors. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 284(5).