

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Philadelphia Community Celebrate Introduction of Ground  
Breaking Bill to Protect Immigrants in Need of Long-Term Care**  
*Councilmember Jim Harrity introduced ordinance to end the practice of international  
patient dumping*

*Philadelphia* - On September 28th, members of the End Medical Deportation Campaign gathered at Philadelphia City Hall to celebrate the introduction of a first-in-the-nation bill by Councilmember Jim Harrity to end the practice of private medical deportation. The bill prioritizes immigrants in need of long-term healthcare to receive in-language information and decision-making power over their care.

Medical deportation is a practice used by hospitals to deport immigrants in the U.S. without informed consent or through coerced consent of the patient's family. Hospitals charter private flights to transport undocumented patients to their country of origin to avoid having to pay for long-term medical care. Forced deportation of these patients typically results in death or aggravation of their illness or injury.

“Three years ago, a Philadelphia hospital attempted to deport my uncle after he was in an accident where he was hit by a motorcycle as a pedestrian. It wasn't until the community came together to stop the deportation that the hospital gave us the opportunity to look into other options for my uncle. Thanks to that support, my uncle is alive today and has been able to receive treatments that improved his condition. My uncle would surely have died if he had been deported. I hope the rest of the Philadelphia City Council will follow Councilmember Harrity's lead and support this important bill.” said **Claudia**, a member of the End Medical Deportation Campaign & community member directly affected by medical deportation.

The [practice of private deportations by hospitals](#) is unregulated, with little transparency or accountability. Little data exists about this practice. Medical deportations can occur even if the patient is not in a condition to travel safely or receive adequate care in the country of origin. Moreover, medical deportations separate patients in critical conditions from their support and family networks.

“Rarely in medicine are there opportunities for change that are so clearly and so uncontroversially of benefit to patients. Ending medical deportation protects the dignity, and most importantly the right to health, of all people who come through the hospital doors. As future physicians we all pledge to do our best to help the sick, in whatever condition we find them and regardless of their means. Our bill to end medical deportation can ensure that all health systems throughout Philadelphia will do exactly that: truly put people first.” said **David O'Connell**, member of the End Medical Deportation Campaign and Thomas Jefferson University medical student.

Under current law, when an uninsured patient goes to the ER, hospitals are only required to stabilize them before working on their discharge plan. There is no guarantee that hospitals will provide

the long-term or chronic care that a patient may need. Long-term care facilities will often not admit uninsured patients, so hospitals choose to deport them to avoid paying for continued care.

“This bill will put an end to the practice of international patient dumping. Patients and their caregivers should have the option to choose or decline medical repatriation and be given support to apply for emergency medical assistance if they choose to seek care in the United States. In PA these patients have options and hospitals should give patients all of the information they would need to make decisions about their health.” said **Councilmember Jim Harity**.

“Medical deportation leaves families with an impossible choice - including mixed status families with U.S. citizen children and undocumented parents. Do they stay together in a place they already left - sometimes decades ago, sometimes places they fled from in order to save their lives? Or do they face family separation, sometimes permanently? I don’t wish that on anyone. Make no mistake, when hospitals deport noncitizen patients, they are separating families just as surely as ICE does.”, said **David Bennion**, Free Migration Project Executive Director & immigration attorney.

Hotline: You can always access the End Medical Deportation Hotline to [learn more](#) and report a medical deportation at 614-721-4829.

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*The End Medical Deportation Campaign is made up of immigrant advocates, organizations, lawyers and individuals fighting to end the practice of private deportations by hospitals of sick or injured immigrant patients.*