

My experience with one asylum seeker was stressful and sad. Myself and the all team went through a stressful and sad experience with him.

I am a Community Health Worker, and I am originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In October 2022, I was told about a patient that could not be treated in Maine due to the restrictions in his the Maine Care Insurance. He had vision problems that were new. He went to the specialty office who told him that he need a surgery. He also gave the patient eye drops. The patient was hesitant and worried about using the products. The doctor explained him why he was supposed to use the eye drop. As a community health worker, I had to make sure that the patient was using the eye drop as prescribed. The patient was referred to the surgeon in Massachusetts to make a decision about the surgery. He couldn't get his special surgery in Maine because of insurance, and needed to go to Massachusetts for assistance, we needed to go with him. His Emergency MaineCare didn't cover the surgery he needed in Maine. The surgery ended up not happening due to lack of Insurance. I realized how stressful the situation was for the patient.

When I found out about what happened to him in the specialty office, I was so sad because I know how immigrants are suffering with the restrictions on the emergency Maine Care. This insurance limits a patient's treatment. The first time we went to Boston I went to assist the patient with the MaineHealth Access to Care Team. We took the Amtrac down then we went to the emergency department in Massachusetts. I entered with the patient to help him. The ED doctor received us after a few hours of waiting. Our patient explained to me how he traveled for days on the road to come to the United States, crossed more than 10 countries and he was so anxious about how losing his vision.

We had to go with the patient again to assist him during his second appointment at the surgery office so he can meet the surgeon. When the surgeon told the patient he could get multiple surgeries, I saw the patient's face, he was very worried and we had to spend all day in Boston. I saw how painful it was for the patient to leave his kids and go back to Boston for the surgery with his wife. Immigrants suffer without a complete understanding of the systems, and I see how immigrants are limited on their treatment due to the restrictions due to the Emergency Maine Care.

Thanks