

Blue Hellwig
Bangor

Hello, my name is Blue Hellwig, and both of my parents are refugees. They both also struggle with mental illness. My mother performs physical labor and struggles with minor physical disabilities. Luckily, there have always been people who have been willing to help my parents navigate the healthcare system. My mother has done a lot for both me and my father, even though English is not her first language and she speaks with a heavy accent. If Maine cares about its reputation as the whitest state, if Maine truly cares about ALL its residents, there should be way more expansion and investment put into resources and tools for ALL people to be able to access healthcare. Especially during the pandemic, immigrants are at a higher risk due to the fact that they often do not have the same tools or resources to navigate new and complex structures that they have never seen or even conceptualized before. The children of refugees also have a hard time helping their parents navigate. This is due to natural cultural power structures that create barriers, plus it is very stressful as a young person to contemplate your parents' mortality and realize a large chunk of it is in your hands due to the information at your disposal versus the information at their disposal. This is your responsibility as the government of my people.