

Candice McElroy  
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LD 2106

My name is Dr. Candice McElroy and I am a family physician living and practicing in Maine. I have spent much of my career working with immigrant communities and it is vitally important that private healthcare settings are shielded from unlawful entrance by law enforcement without signed judicial warrants. Never in my career has it been important to a patient's health to know their immigration status; I am trained to treat people and not alter my care based on paperwork. Hospitals and outpatient clinics are places where patients should know that they are safe and will be treated with respect and caring, and not be vulnerable to exploitation based on their actual or suspected immigration status. It is unfair to place the burden of enforcement for protecting patients on front-line office staff in clinics or hospitals to determine if law enforcement is attempting to access private areas legally or not. Therefore, we need the backing of LD2106 to make it clear that private areas where patients may be physically and emotionally exposed, and their health and demographic information is available to those caring for them is not exploited for a nefarious purpose.

These same protections extend to schools. Schools also have access to private information about students including demographics and health history. Under no circumstances should schools be used as a hunting ground for law enforcement to identify targets for immigration raids. Just like in the healthcare setting, the office staff at a school should never be put in the situation of trying to determine if law enforcement are trying to access a school and private information through legitimate means. There needs to be a clear understanding that without a signed judicial warrant, no access to non-public areas will be granted.

LD 2106 is an important step to guarantee protections for vulnerable populations in areas that should be safe havens: healthcare settings, schools, childcare settings, and libraries.