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**California's Community Safety Net Hospitals Caution Against Implementation of
Final Federal 'Public Charge' Regulation
*Assure their Communities that Community Safety Net Hospitals are Committed to Serving All Patients
Regardless of Immigration Status***

SACRAMENTO – Private Essential Access Community Hospitals (PEACH), California's association of community safety net hospitals, expressed great concern about the detrimental health and economic effects of the Trump administration's final "Public Charge" regulation issued by the Department of Homeland Security today.

The final regulation expanded the type of public aid programs that would disqualify an immigrant's eligibility for legal status and U.S. citizenship, designating those individuals as a "public charge" if they or their immediate family members participate in certain public aid programs. The expanded public charge definition now includes use of most forms of Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (known as CalFresh in California), and certain housing programs.

"California's community safety net hospitals are deeply concerned that the final public charge rule will result in vulnerable families and individuals in our communities avoiding health coverage, care and nutrition programs for which they are legally eligible because of fear of jeopardizing their legal status," said Rob Curry, PEACH board chair and president and CEO of Emanate Health. "Implementation of this harmful regulation will adversely affect the overall health and economic well-being of communities throughout California."

Last fall, researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Health Policy Research and the University of California, Berkeley Labor Center estimated the regulation could result in 317,000 - 741,000 people disenrolling from Medi-Cal and a loss of \$1.2 billion - \$2.8 billion in lost economic output.

California's community safety net hospitals are already experiencing patients declining to apply for Medi-Cal enrollment under the Affordable Care Act's presumptive eligibility program since the public charge regulation was proposed in October of 2018.

"In this climate of growing uncertainty and fear, our diverse communities can continue to count on California's community safety net hospitals for the care they need and deserve, regardless of a person's immigration status," said Curry.

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Private Essential Access Community Hospitals (PEACH) is the statewide association of private, community safety net hospitals in California. PEACH hospitals serve communities with some of the highest rates of poverty and unemployment in the state – with disproportionate numbers of low-income, low-income elderly, and uninsured patients. On average, California’s community safety net hospitals provide 89 percent of their care to Medicaid, Medicare and uninsured patients. California’s community safety net hospitals also provide more care to Medi-Cal patients and seniors, and more emergency room services and Medi-Cal mental health inpatient care than any other safety net hospital sector in the state.