

**SGIM Position Statement on Care for Undocumented Immigrants**  
**As approved by Council, February 5, 2016**

The right to health care is an internationally recognized human right due to its fundamental impact on the individual's abilities to participate in the political, social, and economic life of society. This statement focuses specifically on the undocumented population of immigrants, as this is a topic of debate currently in the United States and a growing problem for healthcare systems across the country.

One especially timely issue to address is the population of undocumented patients with kidney disease. There are an estimated 6000 non-citizens with end stage kidney disease in the United States. In many instances, these patients are ineligible for scheduled dialysis treatment and kidney transplantation. Denying such standard of care treatments is both financially disadvantageous for our health care system and very poor medical care for this population.

1. There is a collective ethical obligation amongst health care professionals and health care systems to ensure access to standard medical care (including as an example maintenance dialysis and transplant for patients with end-stage kidney disease) to individuals regardless of citizenship status, ethnic origin, nationality, native language, legal or social standing, or economic means.<sup>1,2</sup>
2. Physicians should, individually and collectively, advocate for public and charitable funding programs to eliminate financial barriers to medical care. All physicians should fulfill their social responsibility for delivering high-quality health care to those without the resources to pay.<sup>3</sup>
3. Physicians should uphold patient confidentiality and should not report non-medical information about the documentation status of undocumented non-citizens to the authorities.
4. Physicians should, individually and collectively, work with all relevant stakeholders including patients, policy makers, health insurers, and healthcare systems to ensure, within the best of their abilities, that health resources are justly distributed amongst all.

[1] *Adapted from the Declaration of Geneva*  
<http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/g1/>

[2] *Adapted from the American Medical Association's Health and Ethics Policy H-160.987 Access to Medical Care*

[3] AMA Principle 3-6b.-All health care facilities and health professionals should fulfill their social responsibility for delivering high-quality health care to those without the resources to pay