

# Issue Brief

## Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)



### What's the issue?

- In 2012, President Obama announced that his administration would stop deporting young illegal immigrants who match certain criteria previously proposed under DREAM Act legislation that was not passed.
- The Department of Homeland Security exercised discretion at President Obama's direction by implementing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.
- DACA allows certain people who came to the United States as children and meet certain guidelines to request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years to protect them from possible deportation and allow them to work or attend school.
- The guidelines largely mirror The DREAM Act proposed legislation and include:
  - Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
  - Came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
  - Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
  - Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and
  - Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.
- Since DACA's inception five years ago, over 780,000 young immigrants who were brought to this country as children have been granted DACA status after paying application fees, passing background checks and applying for work permits or being admitted to college.
- The state of Texas, which has previously been successful in blocking expansions to DACA in court, has been joined by attorneys general from 9 other states asking the Trump administration to rescind DACA or face additional court challenges.
- The Trump administration's Department of Justice has declined to say whether it will defend the program.
- In response to the possible issues in the courts for the DACA program, Senators Dick Durbin(D-IL) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and introduced The DREAM Act of 2017.

### Why does it matter?

- Illinois is in the top 10 states with the largest immigrant population. It is estimated that 450,000 undocumented immigrants in Illinois as of 2014.
- Since 2012, over 42,000 Illinoisans have been approved to participate in the DACA program.
- Children who were brought to the U.S. as immigrants are blameless for their current predicament. They were brought here at a young age and it is morally wrong to punish them for the offenses of their parents.
- These children need to have an opportunity to resolve their immigration status and work towards citizenship.
- Providing an opportunity for citizenship is in keeping with our heritage as a nation that treats immigrants fairly and provides a sanctuary for exiles.
- Students eligible under this Act have been raised in our communities and educated in the U.S.
- Rescinding DACA would not only hurt the hundreds of thousands of young people who rely on the program, but it would also affect their employers, schools, universities, families, and the country's economy as a whole.

# Issue Brief

## Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)



### What is the Presence Health perspective?

- **Caring for our younger population now is an investment in their future.** Caring for a person's health, education, and well-being at a young age leads to greater economic productivity and greater human flourishing. We believe the immigrant youth deserve a chance to thrive and succeed and not live in fear of deportation.
- **We are called to be a voice for the voiceless.** Catholic social teaching calls us to advocate for those who do not have a voice and to fight for social justice. We support measures that seek to protect immigrant communities, and believe immigrant youth deserve continued protection and a path to citizenship.
- **Presence Health believes in protecting the dignity of every human life.** Each individual impacted by this Act is created in the image and likeness of God. We are committed to promoting and defending the dignity of human life wherever it is under threat.