



The Health Impact of Family Detentions in Immigration Cases

Approved by the ACP Executive Committee of the Board of Regents on behalf of the ACP Board of Regents on July 3, 2018

- 1. The American College of Physicians continues to strongly oppose the separation of children from their families in immigration cases because of the immediate and long-term health impacts on them, and calls for immediate re-unification of those that have been separated.**
- 2. ACP believes that forced family detention—*indefinitely holding children and their parents, or children and their other primary adult family caregivers, in government detention centers until the adults' immigration status is resolved*—can be expected to result in considerable adverse harm to the detained children and other family members, including physical and mental health, that may follow them through their entire lives, and accordingly should not be implemented by the U.S. government. ACP concurs with the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics that separation of a parent or primary caregiver from his or her children should never occur, unless there are concerns for safety of the child at the hand of a parent, primary family caregiver, or other adults accompanying them; efforts should always be made to ensure that children separated from other relatives are able to maintain contact with them during detention; and community-based alternatives to detention should be implemented to offer opportunities to respond to families' needs in the community as their immigration cases proceed.**
- 3. In every immigration policy decision affecting children and families, government decision-makers should prioritize the best health interests of the child and of the entire family.**