Daily Briefing

Hospitals may be forced to deny care to illegal immigrants

02/16/2011

Under a proposed state law, Arizona hospitals may be required to check a patient's citizenship or immigration status and deny nonemergency care to people who are in the United States illegally, Politico reports.

Under the proposal—the first of its kind in the United States—patients seeking nonemergency care would have to provide proof of citizenship or legal immigrant status prior to being admitted. Although patients seeking emergency care would still receive treatment, the bill requires hospitals to notify federal immigration officials of patients who do not have adequate documentation. Hospitals also would have to notify officials of nonemergency patients denied care because of their status.

Supporters of the Republican-backed bill say it is a crucial way to fight illegal immigration, especially given the tens of millions of dollars spent by hospitals to treat illegal immigrants in the U.S. However, the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association criticized the bill, saying it would create "an undue burden" on patients and hospitals and would "result in a delayed hospital admissions process for all patients, including U.S. citizens." Arizona Democrats, meanwhile, argue that the law would turn hospital employees into immigration agents, Politico reports.

The bill was placed on the state Senate Judiciary Committee agenda on Monday but pulled when Republican lawmakers determined they lacked sufficient votes. Supporters say they plan to present the bill in different committees. If passed, the law would stiffen the nation's most "controversial" state law on illegal immigration, MedPage Today reports. Last year, Arizona enacted a law that required law enforcement to check the immigration status of anyone suspected of being in the country illegally (Wong, Politico, 2/15; Gever, MedPage Today, 2/15; AP/CBS News, 2/14).

New accountable care resources
The Advisory Board has created a comprehensive set of accountable care resources and—for the first time—made many of them available to members of all programs through our Accountable Care Center. Please visit www.advisory.com/accountablecare for the best of our accountable care strategy briefs, webinars, toolkits, videos, and onsite offerings from across our research programs.

Join the conversation
The Daily Briefing is now on Twitter. Want to ensure your hospital's news makes it into our roundup? Follow us at twitter.com/daily_briefing or include #abcdcb when posting your