



Politics

ICE can access some Medicaid information for deportation efforts after court ruling

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez

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A federal judge in California this week allowed officials to share some Medicaid information – including addresses and phone numbers – with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to help that agency in its efforts to identify, arrest and deport immigrants suspected of living in the U.S. illegally.

The ruling amounts to a partial legal victory for the Trump administration and its efforts to carry out a deportation operation of unprecedented proportions.

U.S. District Court Judge Vince Chhabria said in an order Monday the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, can receive biographical, contact and location information from the Medicaid program, for immigration enforcement purposes. That can include the immigration status of individuals, their address, phone number and date of birth.

"Congress could not have made a clearer statement about DHS's entitlement to certain data from other agencies, and that entitlement would be meaningless if it did not also obligate agencies to comply with DHS's legitimate data requests," Chhabria wrote in his order.


Chhabria said ICE's data requests must be limited to people in the U.S. unlawfully. He blocked the agency from having access to a broader set of Medicaid information, including sensitive medical records and data on American citizens and lawful permanent residents.




Judge allows Trump administration to share Medicaid participant info with ICE

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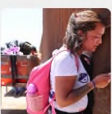
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Generally speaking, immigrants in the U.S. illegally are not eligible for Medicaid or most federal benefits, but states are required to provide emergency care to anyone, regardless of their immigration status. And some Democratic-led states also offer certain health benefits to immigrants who lack legal status.

A group of roughly 20 Democratic-led states, led by California, had challenged the Trump administration's immigration information-sharing effort, saying it will deter immigrants from seeking critical medical care.

The Trump administration, on the other hand, has said the policy will allow officials to better enforce federal immigration law. In a statement to CBS News, DHS spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin said the ruling was a "victory for the rule of law and American taxpayers."

"President Trump consistently promised to protect Medicaid for eligible beneficiaries," McLaughlin added. "To keep that promise after Joe Biden flooded our country with tens of millions of illegal aliens, CMS and DHS will ensure that illegal aliens do not receive Medicaid benefits that are meant for law-abiding Americans."

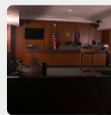
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, a subagency of the Department of Health and Human Services, administers the Medicaid program through partnerships with states.

Under Chhabria's order, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services can share with ICE the basic biographical, contact and location information outlined in his order starting on Jan. 5

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