



Oregon Society of Physician Assistants

tel 503 650-5864
fax 503 210 568-6375

admin@oregonpa.org
www.oregonpa.org

October 8, 2020

Senator Jeff Merkley
United States Senator for Oregon
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C., 20510

RE: The health and welfare of immigrants in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Dear Senator Merkley,

We are writing on behalf of the Oregon Society of Physician Assistants (OSPA), the primary advocacy group of Physician Assistants in Oregon.

We urge you and your fellow Senators to support the letter written by U.S. Representative Pramila Jaypal seeking an investigation into the horrifying reports of medical procedures performed without full, informed patient consent on women held at the Irwin County Detention Center. This letter has already been supported by 173 members of Congress.

Providing care for immigrant families is a hallmark of practicing medicine in many areas of Oregon. Those of us directly serving these patients witness daily the fear and vulnerability within immigrant families in our community - a fear that increases with each new report of abuse by ICE personnel. This constant fear harms the health of these community members, leading to many acute and chronic health conditions. As integral members of our communities and the backbone of much of our state's agriculture and industry, our immigrant families deserve to live lives of dignity, free of fear.

In order for Physician Assistants to improve health outcomes for populations made vulnerable by our immigration system, it is imperative that we build and maintain the trust of these community members. This cannot happen if our patients fear that they will be subjected to irreversible medical procedures without their knowledge or consent. The allegations of the egregious events at the ICE detention center in Georgia must be fully investigated with the intent to bring justice to those harmed and prevent further abuses of power by ICE, if such abuses are proven to exist.

Immigration status should not be the determining factor in deciding that these alleged surgeries are inhumane and unacceptable.

Supporting an investigation into these allegations is the key first step in the creation of a more fair and just American healthcare system for all of our community members, regardless of immigration status.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Ben Johnson
OSPA President

Saje Risen-Davis
Immediate Past President

OSPA Racial Equity
Task Force

Brian Mills
OSPA President-Elect

Lillian Navarro-Reynolds
OSPA Director at Large

