**Model Email to your MP**

**Expressing Concern about Healthcare Proposals Contained in the**

**Immigration Bill**

To find your MPs contact details using your postcode, visit:

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| **Subject: Alarming implications of proposals contained in Immigration Bill about charging migrants and visitors for access to healthcare** Dear *[****add the name of your MP****],* ***[Introduce yourself and add a personal message about why this issue is important to you].***I am writing to express my grave concern about proposals contained in the Government’s new Immigration Bill which pave the way for charging anyone who does not have indefinite leave to remain in the UK to access a GP or emergency care. On 28 August 2013, Dr Mark Porter, the Chair of the BMA Council, described the proposed changes as “impractical, uneconomic and inefficient” and warned that they “could have an impact on the care all patients receive.”If put into practice, I believe these proposals will lead to vulnerable people - including British residents, and those who have come to the UK to seek safety from persecution - being denied access to primary healthcare, because they cannot prove entitlement, do not qualify, or are wrongly refused access by healthcare professionals. Many others, both with and without entitlement, will simply not access GPs because of the multiple barriers presented by the registration/ charging process. This has serious implications for both the physical and psychological health of individuals, and for public health at large. With delayed access to healthcare aiding the spread of communicable diseases, and limited access to immunisation programmes, the risk of epidemics rises. Such a scenario is also unlikely to be cost effective, as individuals will be forced to wait until their health deteriorates and then present in A&E, where it will be both more difficult and more expensive to treat them. Moreover, to date, the Government has been unable to provide any reliable evidence of the extent or cost of ‘health tourism’ to the NHS. Research published by the Department of Health only identified four individuals as health tourists out of nearly 1,000 migrants screened by overseas visitors officers in 15 trusts during August 2013 (0.4% of the sample). Persuasive evidence abounds that migrants bring a net benefit to UK economy, undermining the argument that they are a drain on services such as the NHS: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/1113/05112013-ucl-migration-research-salt-dustmann.I urge you to oppose measures which enable the introduction of charging for primary and emergency healthcare, and convey these concerns to the Secretary of State for Health, and the leader of your party. I would appreciate it if you could keep me informed of any action you have taken on this matter.Yours sincerely***[Add your name and address]*** |