

WONCA POLARIS NEWSLETTER

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MIGRANT HEALTH

The politics surrounding refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and immigrants are constantly in flux, with a prominent place in the news over the last few years thanks to both physical and philosophical changes in North America. With around 100 million people per year being forcibly displaced from their homes – 42% of those under age 18yo – every country has developed policies around migration with Canada continually leading the world in resettlement of refugees, and the United States recently increasing limitations and changing the process of immigration for many. Lets start with some definitions.

Migrants and immigrants refer to those who choose to leave their country of origin. Refugees and asylum seekers are those fleeing due to persecution and seeking protection in another country, with Asylum seekers comprising those who have not been legally recognized as refugees. For the purposes of this newsletter, we will use the term migrant to include migrants, immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Our newsletter today brings you resources and stories about Migrant health. If you would like to learn more, check out our website for full interviews, more resources, and more info about Wonca Polaris!

MIGRAINT HEALTH RESOURCES

Pg 2.

Board members bring you their lists of resources for caring for the health of migrants.

FEATURED FAMILY DOC

Pg 3.

Learn about the work and struggles of Family Doctors caring for migrants

www.woncapolaris.com



CANADIAN RESOURCES:

1. *Government of Canada* - <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-within-canada.html>

- Developed by the Government of Canada, this website/resource is aimed at providing a list of free and readily available information/services for refugees who are newly settling into Canada. Navigate the website based on the region you are living in and the services you are looking for.

2. *Canadian Council for Refugees* - <https://ccrweb.ca/en>

- To view the member organizations of the CCR, navigate the website to the "Member Hub" tab and select "Member organizations".

3. *Jumpstart Refugee Talent* - <https://jumpstartrefugee.ca/>

- "Jumpstart Refugee Talent is a refugee led non-profit organization and the only national organization exclusively serving refugees seeking meaningful economic inclusion."

4. *Refugee Support Network (Canada)* -

https://www.facebook.com/refugees.canada/?ref=page_internal

- The Refugee Support Network (Canada) started out as a passionate and idealistic group of multi-lingual students from the University of Toronto who help newly arriving refugees integrate into their new environment. The students, often of similar backgrounds to the refugees, act as a bridge between them and their new home.

USA RESOURCES:

1. *Ethnomed* – <https://ethnomed.org/>

- Through Harborview Medical Center in Washington State, this website seeks to build medical and cultural knowledge about groups living in the Seattle area to improve the care they receive in their community and from their providers.

2. *Immigration Medical Exams* - <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/find-a-civil-surgeon>

- Find a list of providers designated to perform medical exams for Green Card applications.

3. *Medical examinations for Refugees* -

<https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/guidelines/domestic-guidelines.html>

- Check out the Centers for Disease Control's website with guidance for providers performing medical exams for newly arrived refugees and then check out more about your area on your County's Website.

4. *The Society for Refugee Healthcare Providers* - <https://refugeesociety.org/>

- A forum for best practices in healthcare for refugees for providers and the general population.



CARIBBEAN RESOURCES:

1. *The Bahamas* - All Saints Camp (find it on Facebook) which is a refuge of homes for people with HIV/AIDS in Nassau.

2. *The Bahamas* - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Availability: Mondays - Fridays 9:00am - 5:00PM; Email usawacab@unhcr.org

Limited resources exist in the Caribbean; please contact us on our website if you know of others.

Featured Doc: Baharak Tabarsi, MD, FAAFP

We sat down with Dr. Baharak Tabarsi, MD who provides care with refugees through the Valley Wise Health System in Phoenix, Arizona.

Traditionally the refugee population was from Mexico but that changed with the Afghan refugee crisis in 2021 when 80-100K Afghans fled to escape the Taliban. "I escaped from the same region and came to the US as an #asylum seeker and refugee. It's my honor to now be able to serve in this way" she writes on her Twitter account on Sept 14th, 2021. Due to the previous administration reducing funding to refugee services globally, the US was not well prepared for this crisis. Although county health departments perform domestic medical exams, the sudden influx of refugees left many patients with appointments months out. Her



"Among the Afghans that were evacuated, many are highly educated and highly skilled individuals. They are a very resilient population that we should value and look at how they are going to contribute to our society and look at them as a valuable resource and not as a group that is going to take up resources...Now that I have the experience, working with legislators and the academy, given this experience, we need to go back and see what can be improved."

- Baharak Tabarsi, MD

clinic stepped up and provided screenings, prescriptions, labs, and basic medical care to transition these patients to life in the US. Fortunately for these refugees, Dr. Tabarsi not only understands their situation, but can also communicate with them in Farsi. Despite knowing the language and culture, she emphasized the importance of Cultural Health Navigators who play a vital role to refugee care and act as a direct point of contact. A significant challenge that Dr. Tabarsi battles is the hostility and stigmatization of refugees, something she advocates against across social media and traditional news media.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

JAN 14-22

Primary Care Update Cruise

<https://www.emedevents.com/c/medical-conferences-2023/2023-atsu-cme-ce-cruise-primary-care-update>

JAN 18

Border Health

<https://www.aafp.org/cme/all/global-health/border-health.mem.html>

MAR 3-5

Residency Leadership Summit

<https://www.aafp.org/events/residency-leadership-summit.html>

MAY 3-6

Challenges in Sexual Healthcare

<https://symposiamedicus.org/ConferenceDetail?Conf=1652>

