

# CHESAPEAKE PSR

## PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### **HB 16 – Correctional Services – Immigration Detention – Prohibition (Dignity Not Detention Act)- SUPPORT**

The Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is the state affiliate of the national Physicians for Social Responsibility, part of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War which received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. CPSR is a statewide organization of over 700 e-activist physicians, health professions and other supporters which relies on sound, evidenced based public health policy principally regarding prevention of nuclear war and strategies to mitigate climate crisis all through the lens of racial equity and social justice exposed by the pandemic.

Local entities should not be aiding Federal Immigration police in the Detention of immigrants for civil immigration violations. Studies have demonstrated that such detentions, whether of adults, adolescents or children, is associated with high levels of [anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder](#) which too often persists after the detention has ended.

These mental health problems persist after detention has ended. Many of these immigrants have already experienced trauma that caused them to leave their countries of origin and they are having the additional trauma of detention. The detention of immigrants for civil immigration violations during a pandemic is especially unconscionable where being placed in congregate settings, often without proper PPE and distancing that puts them at especially high risk of contracting the SARS-2 coronavirus. A report from Physicians for Human Rights and Harvard Medical School, detailed evidence for cases [escalating more rapidly](#) inside detention centers compared with the US population. Another report detailed how deaths under ICE detention increased 7-fold between 2019 and 2020 and over half were from causes that were [preventable and related to being detained](#) (influenza, COVID-19, and suicide).

Colleagues from Doctors for Camp Closures have reported witnessing substandard care for these detainees. Under the best of circumstances, which are likely rarely seen, State and county prisons are not places where detention is organized for immigrants and doubtfully are places where best practices are likely to occur.

Finally, the trauma with detention is experienced by entire families and we must question why our local governments are contributing to the emotional stress in these communities.

For all of these reason, Chesapeake PSR supports HB 0016 to end the participation of local governments in immigration related detention. We urge the passage of Dignity not Detention and promote healthy immigrant families.

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