

Topic: The ethics of healthcare for the undocumented immigrant

Concepts: Care of a non-English speaking patient, culturally-sensitive care, post-partum depression, undocumented immigrants and immigration, impact of policy on healthcare.

Case example: **AnaLeticia Diaz**



Case synopsis: AnaLeticia is a 23-year-old Mexican immigrant female who gave birth to her first child five weeks ago in the United States. Her husband, Angel, brought her to the clinic today with concerns about her mood since the birth of their son. Dr. Chamberlain is seeing AnaLeticia today, and he has asked for your help concluding the visit by explaining the plan and follow-up to AnaLeticia and her husband, Angel. Before you enter the exam room, the clinic's Medical Office

Manager approaches you with her concern about the Diaz's immigration status. She tells you that they do not have American driver's licenses or other official forms of documentation and she is sure they are here illegally. She wants to report them to ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement), she says it is a legal responsibility of the clinic under the current immigration laws.

In class activity: Give students the above case synopsis. Divide students into small discussion groups and have them answer the following questions for an ethical care discussion of AnaLeticia's case.

1. **Identifying with the patient:** Can you share any examples of how you or people you know have been affected by immigration status? Has this issue ever come up in your healthcare experience?
2. **Understanding the situation:** What are the ethical issues? What are the legal issues?
3. **Knowing the facts:** What are the legal requirements for reporting a suspected undocumented immigrant? Who must report, when, and to whom? How does HIPAA figure in to this situation?
4. **Exploring the options:** What should a healthcare facility today include in an organizational policy on the issue of providing treatment to undocumented immigrants?
5. **Making an informed decision:** Do you believe the clinic can or should report suspicions about AnaLeticia's immigration status to ICE? Why or why not?

Evaluation method(s): A variety of different evaluation methods are applicable to this in-class activity. Choose from any of the following:

1. Presentations or discussion of the in-class discussion questions after the small groups meet.
2. Ethical reflection paper.
3. Creation of a Healthcare Policy on the care of undocumented patients.
4. Simple credit for participation, with or without a make-up assignment. Make-up assignment could be to answer the five discussion questions in writing.

Additional teaching resource: *Undocumented Immigration Discussion.pdf* found under Step One of the AnaLeticia Diaz activity page. This is an answer key and is not part of the student resources.