



Undocumented and Ill: Talking with my Doctor



Knowing my Rights

- Under policy, immigration officials are unable to search, interview, arrest or surveil sensitive locations, including hospitals.
- According to your rights, under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), doctors are generally not allowed to share your personal or identifying information.

Having the Talk

- Prepare what you want to say ahead of time.
- Start slow, focus first on the fear that stops you from coming to the hospital (immigration enforcement, harassment, financial barriers).
- Be direct and clear about the kinds of limitations you have (transportation, financial, little to no support, etc).
- Share briefly if you have witnessed some things that still cause you emotional pain. Share as little or as much as you want, when you are ready to.

Ask for Help

- Ask for a social worker. He may be able to connect you to resources to make the burden more bearable.
- Take advantage of on-site counseling to help talk about the difficulties of being undocumented or painful past experiences.
- Tell the social worker, nurse, or doctor if a procedure is too difficult to go through, especially if it reminds you of painful memories.
- If you need to work, ask the doctor whether accommodations are possible.