

# Refugee Health in Worcester, MA

## Population Health Clerkship

Brooks Willar, Meghan Reynolds, Krystina Habib, RN, and Heather-Lyn Haley, PhD

### WHAT IS A REFUGEE?

**Refugee:** The United Nations Refugee Agency defines a refugee as “someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence.

**Asylee:** Someone who enters a country, fleeing persecution, war, or violence, however not under refugee status. In order to be granted asylee status, they must meet the definition of a refugee (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2012).

### REFUGEES IN WORCESTER

Rank	Country	Number of Refugees Arrived in Worcester, 2007-2012
1	Iraq	837
2	Bhutan	617
3	Burma	272
4	Burundi	112
5	Somalia	101
6	Liberia	45
7	Vietnam	38
8	Democratic Republic of Congo	34
9	Central African Republic	29
10	Ethiopia	11

(Department of State, 2012)

### DID YOU KNOW?

The New Citizen's Center is an ESL school in the Worcester Public School System dedicated to helping children without prior formal education or interrupted education when they arrive in the city!

### OUR PROJECT

Our project consisted of visits to refugee clinics, VOLAGS, refugee support programs, and community health centers to learn about the resettlement process and the resources available for refugees in Worcester. After learning more about these sites and the Refugee populations in Worcester, we aimed to generate a library guide of resources to offer further support and education to clinicians that work with Refugee patients.

### WHAT ARE VOLAGS?

Local, federal and international organizations that support refugees in the process of relocating



Formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England



Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center



Working to Reduce Poverty in America

### REFUGEE SUPPORT



African Community Education



THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN COALITION

Building a Vibrant Southeast Asian Community for a Vibrant Worcester

WORCESTER REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROJECT (WRAP)

### WHAT IS THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS?

Refugee registers with U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees who confirms qualification under international law

Refugees are referred to the U.S Refugee Admissions Program

The regional Resettlement Support Center prepares a case

Dept. of Homeland Security's interviews individual to determine U.S law qualification

If approved, medical exams, security clearances, and cultural orientation program



Resettlement agencies plan final location and begin the resettlement process upon arrival

After arriving in Worcester, Resettlement Agencies have 90 days to establish:

- Housing
- Employment
- Social Security Number/Income
- School Placement/ESL
- Health Insurance (MassHealth)
- Two Health Assessments
- Immunizations
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- General measures to facilitate assimilation

### PROJECT GOALS

1. Learn about the refugee and immigrant populations in Worcester, MA
2. Learn about the resettlement process and specific health needs of refugees
3. Become directly involved within the community with members of the refugee population
4. Generate a library guide with information and resources for clinicians and the general public

### OUTCOME AND FUTURE WORK



In the future, it is important that the most current information and resources are available for providers and patients alike

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Frank Murphy (ACE), Meredith Walsh (WRAP), Jose Ramirez and the providers at Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center, Olga Valdman and Lucy Candib from Family Health Center of Worcester, Judy Nordberg, and Heather-Lyn Haley for meeting with and educating us about the processes and challenges Refugees must undertake in their transition to America.