



Connecting Boston Immigrants and Refugees to Health Services

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Health Communications and Promotion ILE

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Roadmap

- Organization introduction
- Rationale for organization choice
- Boston immigrant snapshot
- Communication objectives
- Timeline and media executions
- Evaluation
- Conclusion and questions

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)



Why MIRA?

Interests



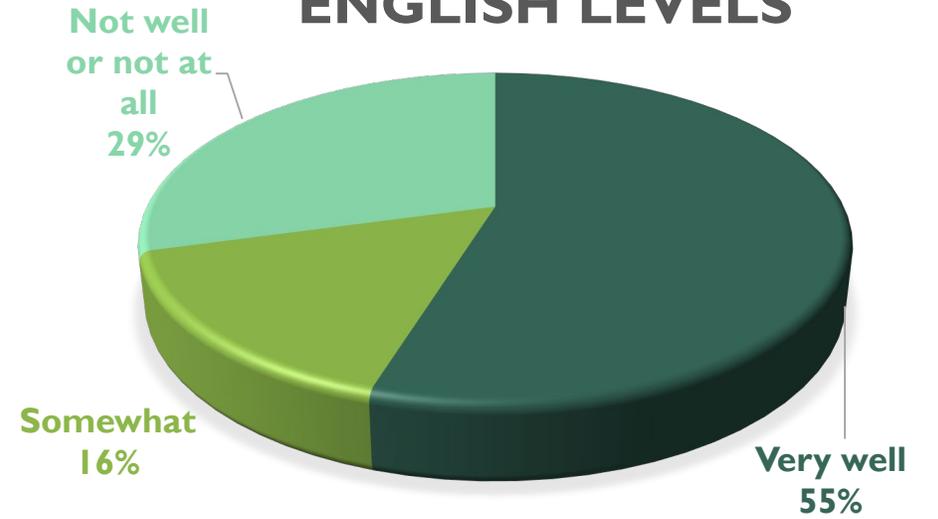
The issue

- MIRA does not prioritize health
- Site is difficult to interpret
- Actionable information missing
- Partnerships are not strong in the healthcare sector

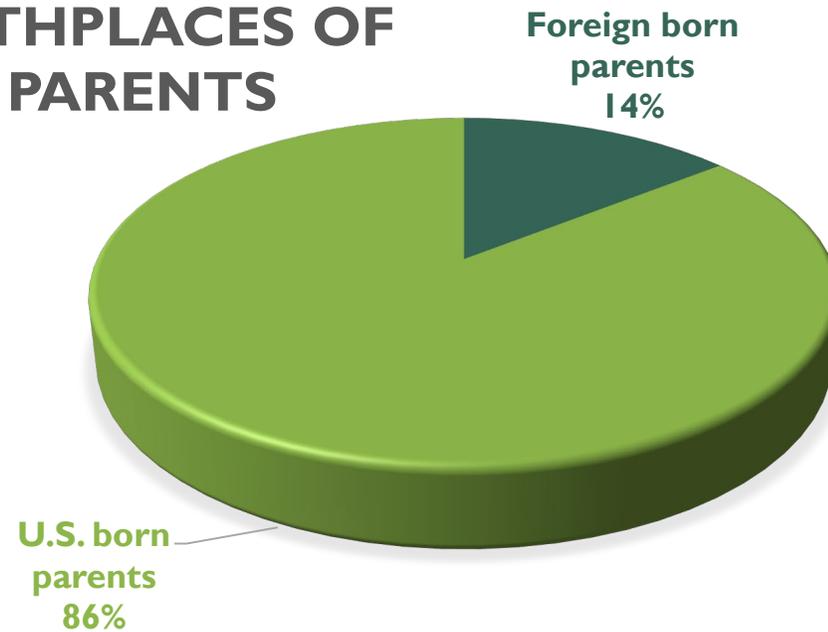
BOSTON BIRTHPLACES



ENGLISH LEVELS



BIRTHPLACES OF PARENTS





Where Are Immigrants In Boston From?

Communication Objectives

Learning objectives

MIRA clients will...

- Know how to access the MIRAhealth website.
- Learn about their options for socioeconomic support in Boston.
- Learn which healthcare providers and organizations provide services specifically for immigrants.
- Believe that quality healthcare is accessible to them, regardless of their legal immigration status.

Behavioral Objectives

MIRA clients will...

- Visit the MIRAhealth website.
- Contact either a healthcare provider in Boston or MIRA representatives for help finding a provider who meets their needs.
- Attend an appointment with a healthcare provider or access a socioeconomic support.



Increase the number of documented immigrants and refugees accessing healthcare in Greater Boston Area.

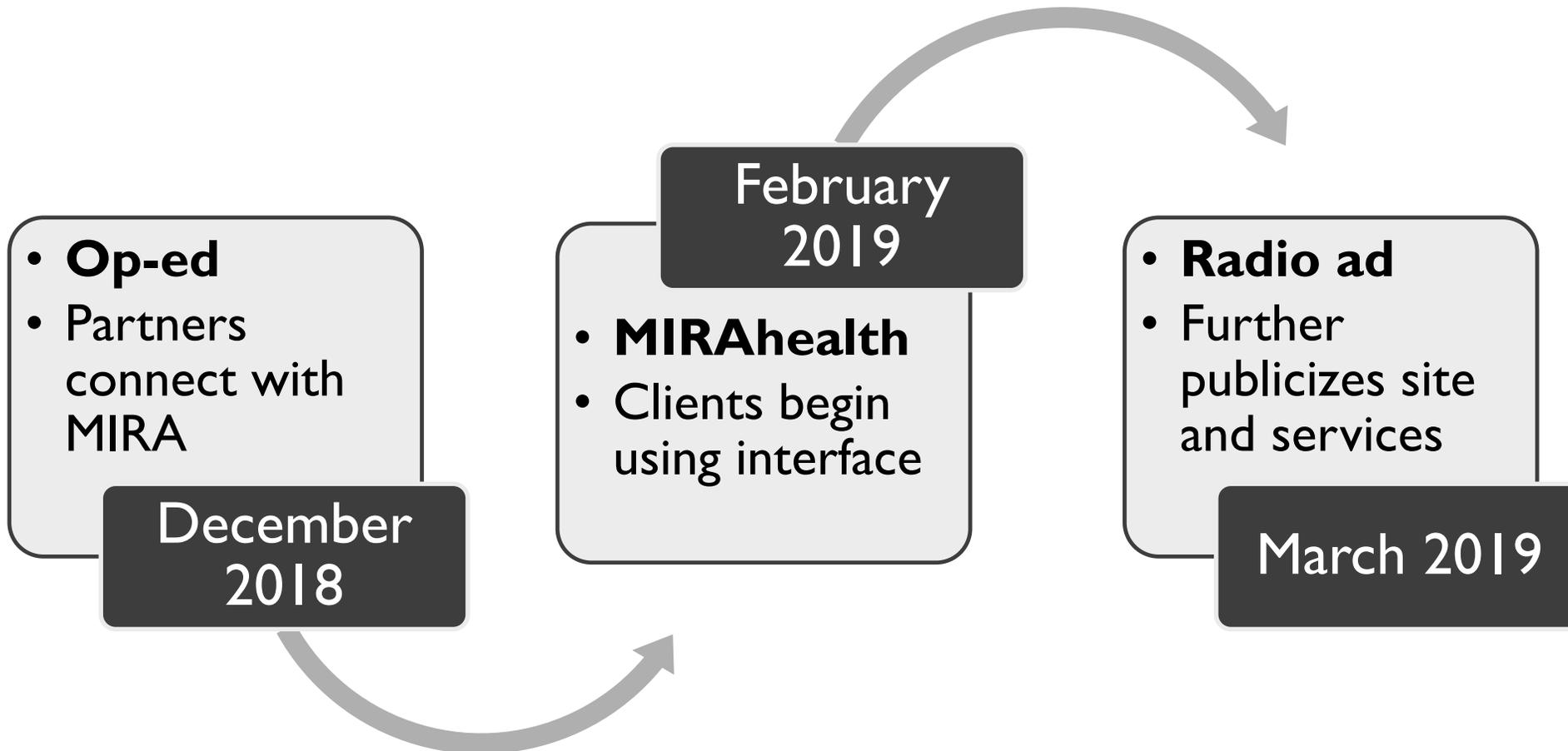
Increase the number of undocumented immigrants accessing healthcare services in the Greater Boston Area.

Long Term Objectives

The Message

- The message will be on a 6th/7th grade spoken and written level
- It will be available in other languages via MIRA translators
- The tone will be inviting and empowering
- The resources will be transparent about what is and is not available

The timeline



Doctors, nurses, social workers: Step up for our immigrant community

Written by: Mary Heida Flores, MPH candidate at Boston University

Grabbing readers'
attention



Imagine getting sick and having no idea where to go. You've never been to a doctor in Boston, maps and signs around the city aren't in your native language, and the hospital staff doesn't speak your language, either. They speak English, and you've only just started learning it.

Highlighting the need



This is the reality for many immigrants to Boston, a large portion of our community. [1 in 6](#) Boston residents is foreign born. 1 in 7 were born here, but have foreign born parents. Navigating the healthcare system can be complicated, especially if you're struggling with English. The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, better known as MIRA, does great work around these issues. While they tackle many topics, the information provided on their "Health and Human Services" [page](#) has fact sheets that explain which immigration statuses can qualify for housing, how to apply for food stamps, and how the government supports survivors of domestic abuse.

Call to action



What's missing, however, is healthcare connections. Health care providers from hospitals and community health centers in Boston need to partner with MIRA to form a better support system for immigrants and refugees. Information can only get you so far, especially information that is not in your native language. We need real health care providers to take an active role in partnering with MIRA and offering services to immigrants and refugees who aren't being reached.

Establishing credibility



I see this need clearly because of what I study and where I've worked. Right now, I'm earning my Master's in Public Health. This means that I don't look straight to medical treatments for answers. I look to what the community and health systems can fix before people even need treatment. This is where community health centers and primary healthcare providers should step in to partner with MIRA. Employees from MIRA can connect their clients with providers who understand the immigrant and refugee experience. This means that language barriers will become less of a problem, and new immigrants and refugees don't have to become dangerously sick before receiving services. They'll have great primary care to help with the small problems.

I also am concerned about access because I worked in south Texas as a teacher. Working close to the border, it was common to meet people who were undocumented. Here in Boston, it is

Highlighting presence and particular importance of undocumented immigrants



the same. Boston and Cambridge combined are [home to 180,000](#) undocumented immigrants. The fear surrounding healthcare access is real. Many hospitals ask for state issued IDs, driver's licenses, or insurance cards that undocumented immigrants don't have.

Stressing need and importance of providers' skill set



Thankfully for us, MIRA is an organization that connects immigrants and refugees to resources. Since they do this in many areas, though, such as legal issues, health, education, and language classes, what the healthcare community needs to do is reach out to them. Health is essential to work, to education, and to family and community life, and MIRA cannot do it on their own. Health care providers are specifically prepared to address this need. All that's missing is the connection.

Further, you don't need to be a doctor that speaks Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, or Haitian to serve Boston's immigrant population. While these languages are helpful, all you really need is an understanding of the experiences of immigrant and refugee patients. You, as a healthcare provider, hold the power to support this group. You have the knowledge, resources, English language skills, and compassion to help them navigate the incredibly complicated system that is American healthcare.

Ends on an actionable step



Reach out to [MIRA](#). Your guidance and partnership will help them improve the health of our immigrant community. Simply put, this is another way of strengthening our entire community. Use your power and knowledge to support the people who need it most: MIRA's clients, the strong community of Boston immigrants.

New to Boston? We're here to help.

Free clinics and services

Boston has 23 free and income-based clinics around the city. These are for persons struggling with money or without insurance. Some are completely free, and some require a small portion of what you would pay at a hospital.



To see all clinics and locations please visit [this](#) site.

Food stamps (SNAP)

Follow [this](#) link to find out if you qualify for food stamps. While undocumented individuals do not, many non-citizens do.



To apply directly for SNAP, go [here](#).

If you do not qualify for food stamps, go [here](#) for access to Boston Medical Center's food pantry.

Insurance

MassHealth does *not* report to immigration officials (ICE). You do not become a public charge by applying for health insurance.

Housing

State public housing programs *do not require* immigration information to apply. Federal public



Providers

Family physicians:

Obstetricians and gynecologists (OBGYNs):

Pediatricians:

Elderly care:

Infectious disease specialists:

Mental health specialists:

Institutions

Immigrant and Refugee Health Program, Boston Medical Center: <https://www.bmc.org/immigrant-refugee-health-program>

Physicians for Human Rights: <https://phr.org/>

Pair Program: <https://www.pairproject.org/gethelp>
Pair provides legal help for asylum seekers and ICE detainees or family members of detainees.

South End Community Health Center: <http://www.sechc.org/>
A bilingual staff provides basic medical care, such as checkups, eye, dental, and preventative care, and refers to physicians in major Boston hospitals.

Radio ad: MIRAhealth

Run time: 29 seconds

(voice over) Here at MIRA, we connect immigrants and refugees to *great* healthcare.

Female client: When I first got to Boston, I was scared. I didn't trust doctors and I was nervous to apply for things, like health insurance. But I found the MIRAhealth website, and *all* that changed. I knew where I could get food if my family was low, what kind of insurance I qualify for as an immigrant, and which doctors will understand my situation.

If you're scared like I was, you *have* to visit MIRAhealth. I finally feel safe and prepared for any health challenge.

(voice over) To learn all about health care for new Bostonians, visit MIRAhealth.weebly.com.

Qualitative

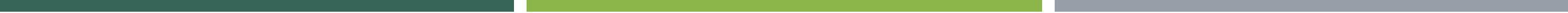
MIRA client
focus group

Quality control
checklist to
reevaluate

Quantitative

MIRA's client
data

MIRAhealth
survey



Thank
you!



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