

Refugees in New Zealand and their Access to Health Care

UNHCR Refugee Quota Programme

- New Zealand accepts 750 people per year, arriving under the following categories: Women at Risk, Protection, Medical/ Disabled.
- On arrival spend a six week orientation period in the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Center where they receive comprehensive medical screening.
- Become permanent residents so are eligible for funded health care.

Asylum Seekers

Convention Refugees or Spontaneous Refugees

- Seek asylum at New Zealand borders, or when their temporary visa or permit expires.
- Claims for refugee status are confirmed or rejected by Immigration New Zealand, dependent on meeting criteria set out in the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. If claims are successful they can apply for permanent residence.
- Asylum Seekers with claims *in process* are eligible to free health care equivalent to NZ Permanent residents.
- Free comprehensive health screening is arranged through Public Health Services in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, but further health care is not funded. Screening is voluntary and the results do not impact on their claim.

Refugee Family Support Category (RFSC)

- New Zealand accepts 300 people per year (although this target has never been reached). Relatives of UNHCR refugees or asylum seekers already settled are able to apply to sponsor family members under this category.
- No resettlement support is received. Sponsors agree to ensure that the family they sponsor will have adequate accommodation, and provide accommodation for the first 24 months in New Zealand.
- Required by New Zealand Immigration Service to have a medical check up in their country of origin.
- Once RFSC status is approved they become permanent residents and health care is funded. They can be referred by GPs for free public health clearance screening for tuberculosis.

“Family Reunification”, “Hidden Refugees” or “Refugee-like Migrants”

- Not an official category of refugee, classified as migrants. Many will have similar health issues as refugees as they are coming from refugee camps or similar situations.
- Not eligible for any resettlement support.
- Includes people on temporary work or visitors visas so they can remain in New Zealand to meet requirements for residency e.g. new partners of refugees - often family arranged marriages; siblings.
- Health care is not funded if work or visitor's visa is less than two years. Health care is funded if work permit is greater than 2 yrs.