

# Immigration Physicals

If you or a loved one is applying for an adjustment of status for legal permanent residency (Green Card), Family Healthcare can provide the necessary USCIS-required immigration physical and paperwork (I-693 form) at our Downtown Fargo Location by our Civil Surgeon, Dr. Napoleon Espejo.

## How to Schedule an Appointment for an Immigration Physical at Family Healthcare

Please call us at 701-271-3344. Our staff will take some basic information from you, and someone from our immigration team will contact you within 1-2 business days to help you schedule your appointment with Dr. Espejo.

While every attempt is made to schedule you as soon as possible, please understand that availability is limited and on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## How to prepare for your Immigration Physical at Family Healthcare

### Step 1.) Schedule your appointment.

- When you call our office, our call center staff will take your information, and someone from our immigration team will contact you in 1-2 business days to schedule your appointment.
- You will get a letter in the mail within one week after scheduling your appointment explaining what to bring on the day and your appointment date and time.
- Let us know if you require an interpreter for your visit, and every attempt will be made to schedule an interpreter in your preferred language.

### Step 2.) Gather your documents.

- You must provide an unexpired government-issued photo ID on the day of your appointment.
  - Examples include: Driver's license, driver's permit, State ID card, or passport from your home country, EAD Card (Employment Authorization Document)
  - Expired Documents are not acceptable.
- Gather previous immunization records from previous healthcare providers (if you have any). Please also bring childhood immunization records as well. Records from other countries are acceptable.
- Previous records regarding tuberculosis testing (especially if you have ever had to rule out active tuberculosis with sputum testing). This includes lab work and chest x-rays.
- If you have previous records of latent tuberculosis treatment, please bring these records.
- If you have a "Request for Evidence" letter from USCIS, please bring that.

### Step 3.) Arrive early for your appointment.

- Please arrive 30-60 minutes before your appointment, especially if you are new to our clinic.
- Please let our front desk know if you require assistance with an interpreter.
- If you wish to have someone else other than yourself receive medical information or pick up your paperwork, please fill out the "Patient Release of Verbal Information" form in your registration packet
- If you would like to send and receive correspondence to your care team via our online patient portal, please give the front desk staff your email address, and you will be sent a registration email.

- It is very important that you provide an up-to-date phone number with a voicemail set up, as that is how we will contact you when your paperwork is completed and ready to be picked up/mailed to you.

#### Step 4.) After your registration

- Be prepared to be at our clinic for 2-4 hours after your registration, depending on how many people you have in your group, what vaccines you need, and what lab work is ordered.

## What to expect during your appointment

- 1.) Be prepared to be at our clinic for 1.5-3 hours after your registration, depending on how many people you have in your group, what vaccines you need, and what lab work is ordered.
- 2.) The nursing staff will take you to an exam room, get basic information, and take photocopies of your provided records.
  - At this point in the visit, please indicate to nursing if you have any special requests regarding how to handle your completed I693 form such as:
    - The need for additional copies (we always include one photocopy of the form in addition to the sealed envelope)
    - If you need the original paperwork or a photocopy sent to your immigration attorney (you will need to complete a release of information form at the time of the visit to your attorney's office)
    - If you would like to pick up your completed form in a sealed envelope
    - If you would like someone else to pick up your completed form (if so, who)
    - If you would like your paperwork mailed certified to you (we will only do this if you live out of the Fargo Moorhead Area)
- 3.) The nursing staff will provide you with the most up-to-date copy of the I693 form for you to complete:
  - Pages 1-2 Part 1., Part 2. and Part 3. You, the patient, must complete it in legible, **black ink**. Answer every single question.
  - Page 2, Part 2, #6. "Applicants Signature" Must be signed by the patient, **DO NOT DATE THE SIGNATURE**
  - If you require an interpreter to guide you through the paperwork, the interpreter must complete and sign Part 3 on Page 3. of the form
  - If someone filled out the paperwork for you, that person will need to fill out and sign Part 4 on pages 3-4
- 4.) Dr. Espejo will see you, complete a physical exam, and take your medical history. He will review your records and order the necessary vaccines and lab work.
- 5.) After your visit with Dr. Espejo, nursing will prepare and administer vaccinations to you if you require vaccinations.
- 6.) Once that is completed, please go to the lab on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. You are then free to leave the clinic and wait for our team's phone call/voicemail with next steps.

# What happens after the appointment?

- 1.) After your appointment, Dr. Espejo and our immigration team will wait for your lab results which can take up to 5 days to receive. If all lab work is within the expected ranges and vaccines are up to date, expect it to take 14 days for your paperwork to be completed.
- 2.) Lab work outside of the expected ranges may delay your paperwork depending on what additional tests or treatments are needed.
- 3.) Once the test results are received, Dr. Espejo and our immigration team will review them and re-review your vaccine records.
- 4.) If additional testing, treatment, or vaccinations are needed after the visit, our immigration team will contact you with further instructions on completing these next steps so we can finish your paperwork.
- 5.) If you completed your paperwork, all lab work is within the expected ranges, and all vaccines are completely up to date, the paperwork can be dated and prepared in a sealed envelope ONLY to be opened by USCIS
- 6.) Our immigration team will complete the paperwork, prepare it in a specially marked envelope only to be opened by USCIS, and a copy will be attached via a rubber band.
- 7.) Our immigration team will contact you via phone (voicemail if no one answers) when the paperwork is ready to be picked up or mailed certified.
- 8.) If you are picking up your paperwork, it will be at the Downtown 301 NP Ave Information desk on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Please indicate to the staff that you are there to pick up your USCIS paperwork.
- 9.) If you live outside of the Fargo Moorhead area, our team will get in touch with you via phone to give you the tracking number prior to mailing out your paperwork.

# What vaccines need to be completed prior to the paperwork being completed?

## USCIS Requires Adults to have the following vaccines:

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella Vaccine (MMR)
  - 2 doses of the MMR, spaced at least 28 days apart (for people born in 1957 or later)
- Varicella Vaccine
  - 2 doses of the Varicella vaccines, spaced at least 28 days apart.
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (TD, or TDAP)
  - 3 total doses of TD (at least 1 dose needs to be a TDAP)
  - 2 doses of TD/TDAP spaced at least 28 days apart.
  - 1 additional dose of TD/TDAP 6 months after the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose
  - Childhood immunization records with a history of DTAP/DTP may fulfill some of these requirements.
- Influenza vaccine (required October 1<sup>st</sup>-April 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Pneumococcal Vaccine (for patients ages 65+)
  - 1 dose of PPSV 23 or PPSV 20

- Hepatitis B vaccine (required for adults under age 60 years old)
  - 3 total doses of Hep B vaccine.
  - 2 doses spaced 28 days apart.
  - 1 additional dose 6 months from the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.
- COVID 19 Vaccine
  - 1 Primary series of COVID 19 vaccine.
  - If Janssen vaccine used, 1 dose of Janssen.
  - Pfizer and Merck, 2 doses spaced at least 3-4 weeks apart depending on brand.
  - **A primary series of COVID 19 vaccines must be completed prior to the paperwork being completed.**

### USCIS Requires Children to have the following vaccines:

- The child must be up to date on CDC recommended vaccines based on age of the child.
- The schedule of the vaccines varies based on the age of the child and how many doses they have previously received.
  - These vaccines may include: Rotavirus, Haemophilus influenzae (HIB), Pneumococcal (PCV 13) , Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (DTAP), Polio (IPV), Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A, Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR), Varicella, Meningococcal (MCV4)
- COVID 19 Vaccine
  - **Primary 2-3 dose series completed for all patients 6 months and older.**
- Influenza vaccine (required October 1<sup>st</sup>-April 1<sup>st</sup> and any other time clinic has it in stock)

## Common Questions from Patients Regarding the Immigration Physical Process at Family Healthcare

What happens if I cannot finish all these vaccines before I need my I693 form completed?

- Most of the time, the vaccine series needs to be started and up to date the day the form is completed. If your vaccine series is not completed the day the paperwork is complete, we still recommend you finish your vaccine series so they are up to date for the future in case you ever need to re-do your paperwork
- **The primary series of COVID 19 vaccines MUST be completed before the paperwork being prepared with NO exceptions at this time for patients ages 6 months and older.**

What happens if I do not want to get a vaccine? Can I decline the vaccine?

- You can decline a vaccine, and we can still fill out your paperwork. However, you will need to apply for a waiver to do so. Family Healthcare cannot assist you with the waiver or advise you on that waiver form. Please discuss any requested waivers with your immigration attorney.
- If there is a valid medical reason to decline a vaccine (for example-a vaccine that is not recommended in pregnancy and you are pregnant, a severe allergy to one of the vaccines) we will be able to document on your paperwork that there is a contraindication at this time and still will be able to complete and sign your paperwork. Please discuss this with the civil surgeon at your appointment.

Are titers an option?

- For some of the previously mentioned vaccines, there is an option called an immunity titer. A titer is a blood test that can determine if you have prior immunity; therefore, a vaccine is not needed. In some circumstances, a patient may prefer to have a titer drawn to see if they are immune to measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, or hepatitis B. If these are positive, a vaccine may not be needed. However, if the titer is negative, the vaccine for the diseases will still be required by USCIS.
- Titers for other diseases not listed above (including COVID 19) are NOT accepted by USCIS.

### What labs are required for the examination?

- For patients ages 2 years and older, a blood test called an IGRA (also called a QuantiFERON) will need to be performed and the blood test will need to be sent to Sanford lab to process.
- The IGRA results take up to 5 days to come back from the Sanford Lab. If the IGRA (QuantiFERON) is positive, a chest x-ray will need to be performed.
- For patients ages 18-44 a blood test for the disease Syphilis will need to be done the day of the appointment. This is often called an RPR test. This blood test will need to be sent to the Sanford lab to be processed.
- For patients in certain age group, testing for the disease gonorrhea will also need to be performed and will need to be sent to the Sanford Lab for Processing

### What happens if my IGRA (QuantiFERON) test is positive?

- If your IGRA test is positive, this can indicate that you have tuberculosis bacteria in your body.
- This is **very common**, and it is estimated that one out of every 3 people in the world has tuberculosis bacteria in their body.
- As long as you are not feeling sick (recent unexplained weight loss, cough, night sweats) USCIS will just require a **normal** chest x-ray for us to be able to finish your paperwork.
- If your IGRA is positive, someone from our immigration team will get in touch with you to let you know that you will need to come back to our clinic for an x-ray. This will be a walk-in visit (no appointment needed) and can be done anytime 8-5 Monday-Friday as long as Dr. Espejo has placed the order for the chest x-ray.
- If you live outside of the area and do not wish to return to our clinic for the x-ray, we can send the order to another facility if you are able to provide us with the contact information for which facility you would like to have the x-ray performed at
- Whether you have the chest x-ray at our facility or another facility, you will be responsible for the additional cost of the chest x-ray that will be billed to you
- Family Healthcare uses an outside radiologist to read the x-rays performed at our facility. It can take up to a week before we receive the chest x-ray report back.
- If your chest x-ray is normal, we will finish your paperwork and then someone from our immigration team will call and discuss with you if you wish to receive treatment to weaken the tuberculosis bacteria in your prevent to prevent it from becoming active and infectious in the future. It is not required to receive the treatment; however, it is recommended. In most cases this medication is provided at no cost to you by public health

### What happens if my Chest Xray is abnormal?

- If you have a positive IGRA test and your chest x ray is abnormal (this is rare), you will need to provide sputum samples to rule out active tuberculosis.
- Sputum samples take up to 2 months to process and we will not be able to process your paperwork until the results are completed and active tuberculosis has been ruled out
- Oftentimes, these samples are collected and processed by a local or State Health Department and you may have a nurse from a local county public health office or State Health Department reach out to you to gather some additional information from you and guide you through the process

## What happens if my syphilis (RPR test is positive)?

- If your syphilis blood test is positive, someone from Family Healthcare will contact you.
- You will likely need to return to Family Healthcare, Public Health, or your chosen local healthcare provider to receive antibiotics. The antibiotic treatment can take up to 3 weeks to finish or more.
- The antibiotic treatment must be completed before we can finish your paperwork.

## What happens if my gonorrhea test is positive?

- If your gonorrhea test is positive, someone from Family Healthcare will contact you.
- You will need antibiotic treatment which must be completed prior to us submitting your paperwork.

## What are the costs for this visit?

### Costs of Physical Exam

- At the time of the visit, you will be required to pay \$450 for each person from your group that is scheduled for a physical up front.
- The \$450 ONLY covers the physical exam and paperwork that Dr. Espejo signs.
- The cost of the physical exam cannot be billed to insurance as most insurance companies do not pay for an immigration related physical exam.

### Costs of Vaccines and Lab work

- Because everyone's individual circumstances are different depending on what vaccines they have already had, it is very difficult to give an accurate price quote on vaccines.
- All patients should expect an additional bill from vaccine healthcare for any testing or vaccines performed at the visit.
  - For a typical adult patient who has never had any of the required vaccines and receives all of the required vaccines the day of the exam, the additional costs can be over \$1,000 if all vaccinations are needed.
  - If additional cost estimates are needed, please reach out to the Family Healthcare Billing department at 701-271-3344
- A separate bill will receive for any lab work performed at Family Healthcare which is processed by Sanford Health Lab
  - If additional cost estimates are needed for lab work processing, please reach out to Sanford Health Billing Department 701-234-2000
- Because the visit with Dr. Espejo is an exam for immigration, oftentimes, insurance does not pay for any of the vaccines or lab work done at this visit. Family Healthcare and Sanford will try to bill your

insurance for the costs of any vaccines given and lab tests performed, however, there is no guarantee that it will be covered by your insurance.

## How Can I help make my visit and physical process more affordable?

Family Healthcare understands that the immigration process is expensive, and we make every effort to try to make the immigration physical process as affordable as possible.

### Consider applying for our Sliding Fee Scale Discount Program Prior to Your Physical Appointment to help reduce the cost of your physical exam!

- Call Family Healthcare at 701-271-3344 and ask to speak with our enrollment department and see if you qualify for our discount program.
- If you are eligible for our discount program, you could receive a discount on your physical (depending on what level of discount you are eligible for)
- The enrollment process **MUST** be completed **PRIOR** to the physical appointment in order for you to receive the discount.

### Consider getting your vaccines and lab work before you come.

Family Healthcare is more than willing to administer the required vaccines and lab work at our clinic on the day of the physical exam appointment for convenience. However, we understand there are circumstances where it may be more affordable to have some of these services done before you come.

- Sometimes, patients find it more cost-effective to have some of their lab testing and their vaccines completed with their local public health department, family planning clinic, or their primary care provider's office before coming in for their immigration physical.
- Some testing (the syphilis test) does need to be performed by our office on the day of the visit.
- Some testing can be performed before visiting our clinic as long as the results are within 60 days of your visit such as:
  - Tuberculosis Testing
    - IGRA (Quantiferon) testing for tuberculosis
    - A chest Xray if IGRA is positive.
  - Gonorrhea testing
- Vaccines can also be received prior to your appointment. Please use the previous information listed above and the chart below to determine the vaccinations needed along with your primary care provider or local public health. A complete 1-3 dose (depending on vaccine brand and age of patient) is also required prior to completing the paperwork. We recommend you have that completed before your appointment if possible.

If I choose to have my vaccines and lab testing done prior to the appointment, will you honor them?

- Yes, if you choose to have your vaccinations done elsewhere, as long you bring your records with you or fax them to Family Healthcare Medical Records Department fax # 701-271-3347, we will honor the vaccinations that you have had completed elsewhere.
- If you choose to have your lab work done elsewhere, as long as it is done within 60 days, we will honor the lab work that you had done elsewhere, as long as you bring your records with you or fax them to Family Healthcare Medical Records Department fax # 701-271-3347.
- Additional, Family Healthcare nursing staff does check the North Dakota and Minnesota State Vaccine Databases to determine if there are additional records that can be found of previous vaccine records. However, please still plan to bring/fax your records to us.

What happens when my paperwork is completed?

**NOTE: It is very important that you DO NOT OPEN THE SEALED ENVELOPE with your completed I693 paperwork. This MUST be opened by USCIS only!**

What happens if I plan to pick up my paperwork?

- When the I693 form is completed, it is prepared in a special sealed envelope that is ONLY to be opened by USCIS.
- We always provide you with one copy which will be attached to the original for you to review.
- Family Healthcare immigration team will reach out to you via phone to let you know your paperwork is ready to be picked up.
- If you do not answer your phone, we will leave a voicemail on the phone number on file
- You can come anytime 8-5 Monday-Friday to the Downtown Family Healthcare Location and let the staff member at the front information desk on the first floor.
- NOTE: If you want someone else to pick up your paperwork or to be able to discuss your medical information with Family Healthcare, please ask to fill out the “verbal release of information form” to designate someone at the time of your visit

What if I want my completed I693 physical form mailed to me via certified mail?

- If you live outside of the Fargo-Moorhead Area, you can let the staff know at your physical that you wish to receive your paperwork via certified mail for no additional cost to you.
- When your paperwork is completed, we will call you and let you know that we are mailing you the form certified and will provide you with a tracking number.
- To receive certified mail:
  - This type of mail requires a signature in order to be delivered. If you are not home when the postal worker comes by, they will leave you a notification and the paperwork will be at your local post office.
- You can open the large yellow envelope you receive in the mail, the smaller envelope for USCIS will be inside.



## Can Family Healthcare Submit my completed I693 physical form to USCIS?

- No, Family Healthcare cannot submit your completed I693 physical form to USCIS, you or your immigration attorney will need to submit it to USCIS.
- Family Healthcare CAN fax/mail a copy (or the original) of your completed I693 form to your immigration attorney; however, a release of information form must be completed prior to us doing so

## What happens if I need my paperwork re-done for some reason?

- If a circumstance arises that you need your I693 re-done and re-sealed in a new envelope, Family Healthcare will do this free of charge as long as it has been less than 2 years since you had your physical with Dr. Espejo, however, you will need to call and make an appointment with a member of our immigration team member to sit down with you and review your vaccines and have you sign new paperwork.
- There is a possibility that you may need additional vaccines to be completed prior to re-doing your paperwork if you have not previously received the full series of vaccines OR the vaccine requirements have changed since your physical exam.

## Other Questions from Patients

- **Question:** I came to the United States as a resettled refugee, or I know I already had an exam from a panel physician overseas. Can Family Healthcare still complete my I693 form?
  - **Answer:** Yes! Family Healthcare is happy to complete your I693 form for these circumstances. Please call our main line at 701-271-3344 and leave a message for our immigration team. Someone will call you to schedule an appointment to review your vaccines with you and have you start the paperwork process.
    - Once you have completed and signed the I693 paperwork, if all of your vaccinations are up to date and we have the records, we will complete your paperwork and have it ready to be picked up or mailed certified in 14 days following the same process mentioned previously.
    - The cost for just the I693 paperwork completion without the exam is \$45 for patients not currently established with Family Healthcare.
    - The cost for just the I693 paperwork is \$25 for patients who are currently established (seen within the last 12 months) with a primary care provider at Family Healthcare
- **Question:** I would like not to have Dr. Espejo disclose some of my immunizations or medical history on my I693 paperwork. Is this possible?
  - **Answer:** No! Dr. Espejo must be very honest about disclosing any previous medical conditions we are aware of and all of your immunizations and lab work.
- **Question:** I have my interview scheduled already; can you expedite my paperwork?
  - **Answer:** Our team works very hard to complete the paperwork quickly. However, to keep up with the demand for these physicals and to be as fair to all of our patients as possible, we do ask that all patients give us at least 14 days from the date of their physical appointment IF all of their lab work is normal and all vaccines are completely up to date.
- **Question:** Will you call me when you receive my test results?

- **Answer:** No, unless it is abnormal. Typically, no news is good news! Our immigration team typically only reaches out to patients via phone if abnormal lab work requires additional testing or treatment. Otherwise, we will call and leave you a voicemail (if we can't reach you) when it is time to pick up your paperwork or when it is ready to be mailed.
  
- **Question:** Can I receive follow-up testing/care at my primary care provider's office or somewhere more conveniently located?
  - **Answer:** Sometimes, patients need additional follow-up treatment like a chest x-ray, and they live out of town and prefer to have it done at their local clinic. This is possible if you provide our staff with the name and location of the clinic you would like your testing done.
  
- **Question:** Should I reschedule my immigration interview if I can't get my I-693 completed in time?
  - **Answer:** No! USCIS recommends that you still attend the scheduled interview as planned and mail your I693 afterward.
  
- **Question:** I got a TB skin test at work; will that count?
  - **Answer:** No. Skin tests are not accepted.
  
- **Question:** I got a TB vaccine (BCG) in my home country. Does that mean my TB blood test is a false positive?
  - **Answer:** No, BCG does NOT impact blood test results.
  
- **Question:** I am applying for citizenship. Do I need an immigration physical and I693 form?
  - **Answer:** No. I-693 is only required for LPR; no health forms are required for citizenship.
  
- **Question:** My exam was over 2 years ago. What do I do?
  - **Answer:** You will need a completely new exam. All previous vaccines are still considered valid.
  
- **Question:** I don't have a valid unexpired ID. What do I do?
  - **Answer:** We can still complete your form. Frequently, the I-693 form is accepted by USCIS without an ID. Please speak to an immigration attorney if you have further questions.
  
- **Question:** Can I use my H.S.A./F.S.A. to pay for my exam or other charges that occur during this appointment?
  - **Answer:** You may be able to use your H.S.A./F.S.A. for these expenses, however you should check with your plan to ensure that the expenses are considered eligible.