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## Separating parents and children at US border is inhumane and sets the stage for a public health crisis

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*Statement from the American Public Health Association and Trust for America's Health*



Washington, D.C., June 15, 2018— "The Trump administration's policy of separating parents and children at the U.S.-Mexico border will have a dire impact on their health, both now and into the future.

"As public health professionals we know that children living without their parents face immediate and long-term health consequences. Risks include the acute mental trauma of separation, the loss of critical health information that only parents would know about their children's health status, and in the case of breastfeeding children, the significant loss of maternal child bonding essential for normal development. Parents' health would also be affected by this unjust separation.

"More alarming is the interruption of these children's chance at achieving a stable childhood. Decades of public health research have shown that family structure, stability and environment are key social determinants of a child's and a community's health.

"Furthermore, this practice places children at heightened risk of experiencing adverse childhood events and trauma, which research has definitively linked to poorer long-term health. Negative outcomes associated with adverse childhood events include some of society's most intractable health issues: alcoholism, substance misuse, depression, suicide, poor physical health and obesity.

"There is no law requiring the separation of parents and children at the border. This policy violates fundamental human rights. We urge the administration to immediately stop the practice of separating immigrant children and parents and ensure those who have been separated are rapidly reunited, to ensure the health and well-being of these children."

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