



September 8, 2006

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MEMBER CLINICS:

AltaMed Health Services Corporation
American Indian Healing Center, Inc.
Arroyo Vista Family Health Center
Asian Pacific Health Care Venture
Central City Community Health Center
Chinatown Service Center Family Health Clinic
City Help Wellness Center
Clinica Msr Oscar Romero
Community Health Alliance of Pasadena (CHAP)
East Valley Community Health Center, Inc.
Eisner Pediatric & Family Medical Center
El Proyecto del Barrio Family Health Care Clinic
Family Healthcare Centers of Greater LA Harbor Free Clinic
Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic
JWCH Institute, Inc.
Korean Health, Education, Information & Research Center (KHEIR)
Los Angeles Mission Community Clinic
MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity)
Mission City Community Network, Inc.
Northeast Community Clinic
Northeast Valley Health Corporation
Our Saviour Center/Cleaver Family Wellness Clinic
Partners in Care Foundation
Planned Parenthood Los Angeles
QueensCare Family Clinics
Saint John's Well Child & Family Center
South Bay Family Healthcare Center
South Central Family Health Center
Tarzana Treatment Center, Inc.
T.H.E. Clinic, Inc.
The Children's Clinic, Serving Children & Their Families
The Los Angeles Free Clinic
UMMA (University Muslim Medical Association) Community Clinic
URDC/Bill Moore Community Health Clinic
Valley Community Clinic
Venice Family Clinic
Watts Healthcare Corporation
Westside Family Health Center
Westside Neighborhood Clinic
Wilmington Community Clinic
Women's Clinic & Family Counseling Center

Mr. Randall L. Johnson, Chair
Citizens' Health Care Working Group
7201 Wisconsin Avenue; Ste. 575
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Mr. Johnson:

On behalf of the Community Clinic Association of Los Angeles County (CCALAC), we would like to commend the Citizens' Health Care Working Group (CHCWG) for their work and effort in formulating several recommendations to make quality health care more accessible and affordable for all Americans. As a policy and advocacy organization representing 43 community clinics in the Los Angeles County area, we share many of your concerns and are pleased to work with others on formulating viable means of creating a stable healthcare system that provides quality health care to all who are in need. We wholeheartedly agree with the recommendation that neighborhood clinics should be expanded, as these clinics are responsible for providing primary care services to a significant part of the population who could not afford such services otherwise.

We are concerned, however, with the recommendation to "expand and modify the FQHC concept to accommodate other community-based health centers and practices serving vulnerable populations." FQHC is a term that encompasses community, migrant, and homeless health centers. The uniqueness of FQHCs lies in their designation as a 'patient democracy', where the same patients served by a clinic also have a tremendous amount of input concerning the operation of these sites. This characteristic allows clinics the necessary information to act in a responsive, appropriate manner to the community they serve. By 'opening up' FQHCs to other agencies, this unique feature could be potentially lost as others fail to meet this special requirement. While we are supportive of other agencies in their mission to provide affordable health care to underserved populations, we do not support any proposal that would change the provisions of current law that has both ensured quality of care and accountability to the patients served for 30 years.

Thank you for your time and interest in this matter. We look forward to continuing a meaningful dialogue with you and your members on ways to improve our current health system.

Sincerely,

Gloria Rodriguez, M.P.H
Chief Executive Officer

Debra Ward, M.P.H.
Vice President, Governmental Affairs