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La Clínica del Pueblo and Mary's Center Join Local Advocates in Supporting Families During Immigration Raids

The Community Centers Call for No Raids in Clinics

Washington, DC –La <u>Clínica del Pueblo</u> and <u>Mary's Center</u> join local advocates in their efforts to show their support to Central American families who are the target of recent immigration raids. Based on their long experience working with these families, widespread raids like the ones seen in the past weeks are detrimental to community health.

"We serve many Central American immigrants who have survived war, violent gangs, and extreme physical hardship and seek safety in the United States and we have grave concerns that the mothers and young children targeted in these raids may be deported back to situations of extreme violence and potential harm without full due process," said Alicia Wilson, Executive Director of La Clínica del Pueblo. "We are extremely distressed to see the fear that these raids have created in the community, keeping already traumatized refugee families from seeking the vital services that they need in a time of crisis; for us, healthcare is a human right, and we want to ensure that the rights of our community are not being violated."

For decades, Mary's Center and La Clínica del Pueblo have been committed to creating a safe place for immigrant families to receive high-quality health care and social services. Since the announcement and implementation of the latest round of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, these organizations are jointly concerned about the public health distress that they have observed, including the disruption of necessary medical care for and re-traumatizing of refugees OR victims fleeing war and violence in their home countries. They both echoed the calls to local jurisdictions to forcefully speak out against these raids, to reassure the public that schools, clinics, and local government offices can be trusted, safe places for the community, and to call for NO raids in their premises. They also reiterated their commitment to maintaining safe centers for community members to receive health services. As they have done in the past, they voiced their support for comprehensive immigration reform to decrease the stress on vulnerable community members.

"The mission of Mary's Center is to provide health, education and social services to all community members who are working tirelessly to move up the economic ladder. The safety and wellbeing of the people we serve has always been our top priority. We understand that the ICE raids have instilled fear and distrust of public institutions in families across the country. As we continue to provide services to the immigrant community, we hope that they feel safe at Mary's Center," says Maria Gomez, President/CEO of Mary's Center.

Both organizations are joining forces with various community groups that are educating immigrants on how to act when facing these raids and encouraging families to continue to seek services and to keep themselves informed about developments on this issue.

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About Mary's Center

Founded in 1988, Mary's Center is a <u>federally qualified health center</u> that provides health care, educational and social services to more than 36,000 individuals from over 100 countries. Using a holistic, multipronged approach, Mary's Center helps each participant access individualized services that set them on the path toward good health, stable families, and economic independence. For more information please visit <u>www.maryscenter.org</u>

About La Clínica del Pueblo: La Clínica del Pueblo is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) serving the needs of uninsured and underinsured Latino immigrants and others in need in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Today, La Clínica provides over 55,000 linguistically and culturally appropriate health and education services to over 20,000 men, women, youth and children, including: primary care, mental health and substance abuse services, HIV/AIDS care, interpreter services, health education and outreach. All direct services staff is bilingual and dedicated to La Clínica's mission: "to build a healthy Latino community through culturally appropriate health services, focusing on those most in need." For more information or to support the work of La Clínica del Pueblo visit www.lcdp.org.