



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Lyda Vanegas  
Director of Advocacy and Communications  
[lvanegas@maryscenter.org](mailto:lvanegas@maryscenter.org)  
202-420-7051

Amy Bruno  
Communications Associate  
[abruno@maryscenter.org](mailto:abruno@maryscenter.org)  
202-420-7049

**Mary's Center President/CEO, Maria Gomez, recognized by Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in celebration of World Health Day**

**Washington, DC** –On April 5<sup>th</sup>, [Mary's Center](#) President/CEO Maria Gomez was recognized by the [Pan American Health Organization](#) (PAHO), the world's oldest international public health agency, for her "exceptionally meritorious [contribution] to improving health in the Americas" and her "example as role model for current and future generations of public health practitioners." This distinction was bestowed upon Maria at PAHO's World Health Day celebration.

World Health Day is celebrated every year in April to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization. Each year, a theme is chosen to highlight a priority area of concern for global public health.

Hypertension, the topic of this year's World Health Day, is the leading risk factor for death worldwide. One in three people being treated for hypertension fail to keep their blood pressure below 140/90. As a [Federally Qualified Health Center](#) mandated to track and report its health outcomes, Mary's Center regularly screens participants for hypertension and applies its comprehensive model of care to help participants keep the disease under control.



PAHO Director, Carissa F. Etienne, and Mary's Center President and CEO, Maria Gomez, with the award.

In her moving acceptance remarks, Maria invited leaders to listen and respond to the needs in their communities, taking a local approach to global challenges.

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**Mary's Center** is a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center founded in 1988 that provides comprehensive and integrated services at seven locations and two mobile units in the District and Maryland. With an annual budget of \$39.9 million in 2013, the Center projects to serve over 70,000 participants throughout the entire DC region. The mission of Mary's Center is to build better futures through delivery of health care, education and social services. Mary's Center saves lives and strengthens communities, one family at a time.  
[www.maryscenter.org](http://www.maryscenter.org).