



Los Barrios Unidos Community Clinic

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National Association of
Community Health Centers

Texas Association of
Community Health Centers

December 16, 2013

Congressman Darrell Issa
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa,

I am the CEO of Los Barrios Unidos (Los Barrios Unidos) Community Clinic, the largest federally qualified community health center in Dallas/Fort Worth. This letter regarding the Monday, December 16th Oversight Committee hearing in Dallas, Texas answers the question posed by the Committee: *ObamaCare Implementation: Who Are the Navigators?* I also request that this letter and attachment be submitted into the Congressional Record.

That question, *Who are the Navigators?*, is best answered by providing some background on the stellar work done by America's Community Health Centers. America's Health Centers like Los Barrios Unidos serve as health care homes for more than 22 million Americans, providing comprehensive primary and preventive care services. Health Centers are affordable and cost effective, saving the healthcare system \$24 billion each year. One in every 15 people living in the United States depends on the services of a Health Center. With a proven track record, Health Centers will play a critical role in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Moreover, the ACA will continue to play a critical role to strengthen one of the largest, most effective safety net systems of primary and preventive care in our nation.

Locally, Los Barrios Unidos provides comprehensive primary care to 22,000 low income North Texans through 70,000 visits each year. Sixty-six (66%) percent of our patients are uninsured. This number is substantially less than the 77% uninsured just five years ago, but it is clearly still too high. Thanks to the concerted effort of our well training eligibility and enrollment staff, we are making headway in lessening the numbers of uninsured. Everyone knows Texas leads the nation in the numbers of uninsured (<http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/>). Healthy people make for healthy communities.

809 Singleton Blvd. • Dallas, Texas 75212

3111 Sylvan Avenue • Dallas, Texas 75212

405 Stadium Drive • Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Administration (214) 571-6132 • Fax (214) 651-9514 • Appointments (214) 540-0300

At Los Barrios Unidos, our “navigators” (Certified Application Counselors/CACs), number three. I could extol the virtues of each of our CACs, but I’ll select one for expediency. Our lead CAC has expertly guided our eligibility and enrollment efforts for 10 years. She is sharp as a whip, bilingual, beloved, and trusted by everyone she helps to navigate the insurance marketplace. There are many just like her in the D/FW area, each helping dozens of individuals daily. Learning about these highly capable and dedicated individuals will help the Committee adequately answer the question: “*Who are the Navigators?*”

I, or a designee, would be more than happy to testify as a witness at the Committee hearing. Los Barrios Unidos is in the trenches providing care, and financial counseling, for thousands of Dallas’ uninsured, working poor families. The Committee should consider testimony from those individuals and organizations who represent “where the rubber truly meets the road” as we help to implement the Affordable Care Act.

Proudly, we are one of America’s outstanding Health Centers. We are also one of America’s outstanding ACA navigator assistance sites.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Marquez', written in a cursive style.

Leonor Marquez, MBA, LSCW
Chief Executive Officer