

**Testimony to City Council**  
**Office on Latino Affairs Budget Hearing**  
**Committee on Aging and Community Affairs**  
**Chairperson Yvette M. Alexander**  
**April 21, 2010**

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Michael Dalious and I am the Health Promotion Manager at La Clínica del Pueblo, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Columbia Heights serving patients regardless of their ability to pay. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you about the vital role that the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs plays in our ability to serve DC Latinos.

La Clínica receives two grants from OLA, the Latino Community Development Grant and the Latino Community Health Grant. Both of these grants help La Clínica create and maintain an integrated approach to improving and encouraging healthy lifestyles for DC Latinos, supporting community, individual and group services aimed at improving overall health and wellness for the greater community.

La Clínica has been fortunate to receive funding from OLA that links together primary care, patient education and mental health services for our clients. The grants also fund significant community outreach and education through our health fairs, reaching thousands of Latinos across the city with health education, screening, and navigation services. We are proud of the results we have been able to accomplish with the support from OLA, and we see the funding as a big part of the city's investment in the health and wellbeing of the local Latino community.

With the support of OLA funding, we are able to provide innovative programs such as a fitness class, which provides over 1,750 hours of exercise activity. Mental Health programs which have scant funding throughout the city, are funded by OLA as part of an integrated, holistic system of care. Our health fairs use trained Community Health Workers, called *promotores de salud*, who are excellent educators on themes such as diabetes and obesity. Comprehensive programs such as ours that integrate patients into health and mental health

services are key to the overall health of the Latino community in this city. Our community-based outreach is crucial to the development of the Latino community and to the reduction of health disparities.

We are greatly concerned that the proposed Fiscal Year 2011 budget for OLA is about half of this year's budget. As the Latino community grows beyond 10% of the city's population, we are disappointed to see a reduction in funding for the primary city agency that supports this booming population. We see this budget proposal as devaluing the work of OLA and the needs of the Latino community.

We feel very strongly that the Office on Latino Affairs is a strong, well-run agency. We see OLA's staff go "above and beyond" in their work with the community. I have worked extensively with staff at OLA in my tenure at La Clínica, either through planning of countless community events, or through other collaboration between organizations. I see them as key partners in La Clínica's work. Without their help, we would not be able to design and implement the effective programs that I've described to you today.

We know that the Latino community is a vibrant part of DC. It is important that the district government allocate both the resources and the staff to ensure an appropriate reflection of its importance to this city. As the Latino community grows, it is essential that it not be left out of budget and government planning. Not only must funds not be cut, but they need to increase to meet the growing demands of this community. Like almost all nonprofits these days, La Clínica's resources are stretched very thin, and if we want to continue to serve this vibrant community with our integrated health services, we will need continued and increased funding in fiscal year 2011 and beyond.

Thank you for your time today.