

**Testimony to Preventive Health and Health Services  
Block Grant Advisory Committee  
February 15, 2012**

Good morning, committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Alicia Wilson and I am the Executive Director of La Clínica del Pueblo. Since June of 2010, we have been honored to receive funding from the Community Health Administration of the Department of Health for a Latino community wellness project. This funding allowed us to do some of our most innovative programming, bettering our –and the department of health’s-- understanding of the Latino community’s health needs, and designing an effective intervention to change health behaviors.

Through the grant received from the Community Health Administration, we were able to conduct a community assessment of the health needs of Latinos living in Washington, D.C. Staff and health promoters conducted surveys and focus groups to reach a broad cross-section of the local Latino community. Based on the results of this community assessment, we designed an original, culturally appropriate campaign designed to improve healthy behaviors, specifically in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and stress management. With this funding, we have trained 25 health promoters to conduct targeted outreach messages and interventions in these areas.

With the support of the Community Health Administration, we have made a great impact in basic health education, as well as positive impacts on health behaviors around nutrition and stress management. Thus far, we have reached nearly 2,000 individuals in our health fairs, conducted nutrition outreach activities to over 450 District residents in neighborhood food markets, held stress management talks in local community groups, and hosted a soccer tournament. As a result of this funding, we developed strong relationships with many local businesses and community partners who began to engage in this community-wide effort.

Key to this effort was the development of a campaign, *Tu Salud en Tus Manos* (Your health is in your hands), in which the messages were really crafted by our community. The interventions were responding to community requests, and the project has truly been a community effort. The Community Health Administration’s funding has been able to leverage and mobilize a large effort, with a big impact.

With the support of our grant monitors, we have paid special attention to the evaluation of this project. We are proud to report that 85% of our participants reported that they will make a change in their lives as a result of participation our interventions. We are now working on strengthening the connections between this outreach and the medical services that will support the community’s newfound health empowerment, and we have navigated hundreds of our health fairs participants into primary care if they did not already have a medical home.

Throughout this effort, we commend our grant monitors, Laverne Jones and Georgia Henry for their hands-on approach to supporting our project. They have truly been the strongest, most constructively involved grant monitors we have worked with in the Department of Health. Our project has benefited from their collaborative approach.

The funding for this project came originally from the Tobacco settlement. We know that this funding stream will not continue beyond the end of this grant period, and we are concerned about the lack of sustained support from the Department of Health for efforts such as this. We have been working to develop ways to sustain this excellent campaign beyond the grant period and will be exploring those options and our next steps at a conference about wellness in the Latino community on May 16<sup>th</sup>. We invite you to attend and learn in detail what we have been able to accomplish, and to help chart our course for the next phase of this intervention.

The need for an intervention of this type continues, and continues to grow. The Latino community is often an afterthought in city-wide prevention efforts, and complex conditions such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and obesity require innovative, ongoing interventions to move the community to better health. It is my hope that the city will continue to prioritize interventions that can cost-effectively raise awareness, link people to the care they need, and promote wellness, city-wide. Funding from the department of health needs to target high-risk communities and mirror the population of the city in its priorities. This project has been an excellent opportunity to focus the department of health's attention on the needs of the Latino community, and it has had a great impact.

Thank you for your oversight of the Department of Health, and I hope you will consider pushing for continued support of excellent initiatives like this in the Community Health Administration.

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