

11.17.08: Lt. Governor John Garamendi Underscores the Growing Importance of Health Care Clinics

Lt. Governor John Garamendi Underscores the Growing Importance of Health Care Clinics
For the 6.7 million Uninsured Californians Tours new Moreno Valley Health Center in Riverside

MORENO VALLEY, CA –With more risky health care cuts looming, Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi today said community medical clinics like the new Moreno Valley Health Center need to be given adequate resources to help provide preventative health care to the 6.7 million uninsured Californians including children.

“More Californians than ever are losing their jobs and health care coverage and they have few medical options. We cannot abandon them with even more health care budget cuts in the works,” Lt. Governor John Garamendi said. “Clinics like the Moreno Valley Health Center are the last place Californians can get immunizations, pre-natal care and other services."

The Moreno Valley Health Center is the latest of five health centers that Community Health Systems, Inc. (CHSI) has opened across California. CHSI provides many health care services including: primary care, internal medicine, dental, optometry, mental health services and women’s health. The center will help care for some 25% of Riverside County residents who cannot afford health insurance. Riverside County is microcosm of the health care crisis across the state. Emergency rooms are closing their doors and there is a unprecedented increase of uninsured children and workers. California is home to 6.7 million people without health insurance and residents are more likely to be denied coverage for pre-existing conditions and denied coverage at work than most states in the nation.

“We are a full service center for the convenience of our Patients and provide healthcare services the way they are meant to be provided, with Care, Compassion and Competence, not for profit, but for humanity,” said Lori Holeman, Chief Operations Officer for CHSI.

“All of us are one job, one illness away from not having health care insurance,” Garamendi said.

Lt. Governor John Garamendi as a national leader on health care:

- • Lt. Governor John Garamendi has been a national leader on universal healthcare reform since 1976 and during the Clinton administration.
- • As a California legislator, Garamendi authored the Rural Health Act resulting in clinics and medical services throughout California. Garamendi also authored the Emergency Medical Systems legislation improving trauma and emergency services.
- • As California’s Insurance Commissioner, John Garamendi held health insurance companies accountable and issued a Priced-Out Report on health care saying, “We’re in a death spiral. People are being priced out of the health care system.”

Community Health Systems, Inc (CHSI)

- • Community Health Systems, Inc. is a non-profit healthcare organization serving the Tri-County area (San Bernardino, Riverside & San Diego Counties) of Southern California. CHSI participates in a nationwide effort to extend a safety net of health services to those who lack access to health services, especially the low-income, underinsured (or uninsured) individuals with limited means to pay for quality health services.
- • The Moreno Valley Community Health Center in Riverside is CHSI’s fifth clinic in a chain of community health centers across California