



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc. Awarded \$11,000 to Support Their Continued Leadership in Community Health Care**

#### **Foundation recognizes health center as vital member of California's safety net**

**San Diego, CA (October 24, 2016)** - Blue Shield of California Foundation has just awarded a grant of \$11,000 in unrestricted funds to La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc. (LMFC) in recognition of their critical role in the wellbeing of families and individuals throughout their community. The award aims to help LMFC provide ongoing healthcare services & lead innovative efforts to meet the needs of many of the most vulnerable Californians. This will be the third year Blue Shield of California has partnered with La Maestra.

“As a longtime partner and ally of safety net organizations across the state, we’re proud to support La Maestra by providing them with core operating funding,” said Peter Long, PhD, president and CEO of Blue Shield of California Foundation. “This flexible grant reinforces our confidence in their ability to respond to new challenges and opportunities while continuing to ensure access to high-quality care for thousands of residents in City Heights/ San Diego County.”

The Foundation is committed to improving health equity and strengthening California’s safety net through this award and other philanthropic investments in community health centers throughout the state.

Since inception, La Maestra has served immigrant, refugee, uninsured and underinsured populations living in the underserved communities of central, east and south San Diego County. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to have health insurance or a usual source of care, and therefore more likely to delay needed care. In addition, low income populations are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as smoking cigarettes, eating unhealthy food and not getting enough physical activity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 41% of the population in LMFC’s service area is living below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and according to clinic data, of the 41,317 patients LMFC served in 2015 approximately 92% of these patients live below 200% of

the FPL. These findings suggest a need for increased access to linguistically and culturally competent health services among this population. La Maestra strives to eliminate these health disparities by providing some of the most underserved and racially diverse individuals in the community with high quality care.

Through this generous support, La Maestra is able to sustain the many social services it provides its patients, utilizing its Circle of Care™ model. The Circle is a holistic, solution-based model that attends to the total needs of patients through preventive care, education, treatment and referrals to on-site social services that address the social determinants of health. Innovative, onsite programs include microcredit, financial literacy, job training, a food pantry, community garden, transitional housing, youth after-school and summer programs and legal advocacy services. Although these services do not generate billable visits, LMFC knows providing social services that address the root causes of health disparities and poverty is vital to improving overall health and wellness.

Zara Marselian, chief executive of La Maestra said, “La Maestra is thankful for the continuous support Blue Shield of California Foundation has given to this organization. In order to reach more patients and deliver the highest quality of care, La Maestra is constantly working to improve. Core operating support plays a huge role not only in the organization’s sustainability, but also in its growth.”

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Blue Shield of California Foundation is one of the state’s largest and most trusted grantmaking organizations. Our mission is to improve the lives of underserved Californians by making health care more accessible and effective, and by ending domestic violence. To learn more, visit [www.blueshieldcafoundation.org](http://www.blueshieldcafoundation.org).

La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc. doing business as (d.b.a) La Maestra Community Health Centers (LMCHC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) federally qualified health center. Through its award-winning Circle of Care™ model LMCHC serves more than 41,000 people annually with medical, dental, optometry, mental health and imaging services, as well as legal advocacy, economic empowerment, and social services provided in collaboration with its sister nonprofit La Maestra Foundation. To learn more, please visit [www.lamaestra.org](http://www.lamaestra.org)

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