



LA MAESTRA
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS
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NEWS RELEASE

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Community Clinic Joins Effort to Help Save a Million Hearts La Maestra Improves Detection and Control of High Blood Pressure in Underserved Communities

San Diego, CA—La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) Federally Qualified Health Center in partnership with Million Hearts® and National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) participated in a two year pilot project from July 2014- June 2016, developing innovative strategies to improve hypertension detection and diagnoses and then implementing interventions the following year. La Maestra was one out of 11 FQHCs nationwide selected to participate in the two year project. Million Hearts® is a national initiative with the goal to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017, champion strategies to systematically improve detection, diagnosis and treatment of patients with elevated blood pressure.

This partnership through NACHC allowed LMFC to better capture patients with pre-hypertension and patients that had been undiagnosed or misdiagnosed, contributing to the overall reduction in the prevalence of cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attack and stroke, among underserved and low-income populations in San Diego. These efforts are especially important considering cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and 1.5 million Americans suffer from heart attacks and strokes each year according to (American Heart Association, 2017).

Safety net institutions such as La Maestra play a pivotal role in reducing health disparities. For 26 years, LMFC has served immigrant, refugee, uninsured and underinsured populations in the most ethnically diverse and underserved communities of central, east and south San Diego County. According to the (American Heart Association, 2012), racial and ethnic minorities face more barriers to cardiovascular diagnosis and care, receive lower quality treatment and experience worse health outcomes than their white counterparts. Through its partnership with Million Hearts®, LMFC aims to bridge the disparity gap and increase access to quality health care for all.

By the end of the second year, La Maestra and the 10 other health centers collectively improved their blood pressure control rates by 8.7% according to a report by (Million Hearts®, 2017). La Maestra worked with NACHC to enhance work flow and protocol for identifying at risk patients for pre-hypertension and hypertension. Successful interventions were then implemented, to better capture patients with potentially undiagnosed hypertension, further assisting them with scheduling follow-up appointments. Within one year (second year of project) LMFC identified 1,381 patients with elevated blood pressure, and 415 of these patients enrolled in culturally and linguistically appropriate hypertension education classes.

La Maestra Family Clinic will continue to work collaboratively and innovatively to promote health equity and deliver affordable high quality health care to all San Diego residents.

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La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc., (www.lamaestra.org) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). The organization operates five primary care clinics, ten dental clinics, four school-based satellite sites, one mobile medical/dental unit, and a state-of-the-art mobile mammography coach in central, east and south San Diego County. The mission of La Maestra Family Clinic, Inc. is to provide quality health care and education; to improve the overall well-being of the family; bringing the underserved, ethnically diverse communities into the mainstream of society through a caring, effective, culturally and linguistically competent manner, respecting the dignity of all patients.

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) serves as the leading national advocacy organization in support of community-based health centers and the expansion of health care access for the medically underserved and uninsured. Million Hearts® is a national initiative, in partnership with NACHC, committed to helping prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017.

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