



National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 6, 2017

Dear Members of Congress:

As organizations committed to the civil and human rights, health equity, and well-being of Latinos/as, our families, and our communities, we the 40 organizational members of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHHLA), urge you to oppose all efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) without simultaneously passing a plan that ensures our community will have the same access to affordable health insurance and care. We also insist that you oppose any measures defunding Planned Parenthood health centers or other abortion providers that Latinos/as rely on for high quality care.

Planned Parenthood health centers have played a vital role in ensuring quality reproductive healthcare for low-income women and women of color, including Latinas. Any attacks on Planned Parenthood health centers and other abortion providers threaten to unravel the reproductive health safety net that our Latino/a community relies on for trusted care. We have already seen such efforts in Texas when the state legislature authorized the “affiliate rule” that barred all Planned Parenthood health centers from receiving state funds. In 2012, the first full year following the devastating cuts to family planning funding and implementation of the “affiliate rule,” Texas met only 13 percent of the need for publicly funded contraception—less than half of national totals for the same year.ⁱ In fact, a recent study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* shows that defunding Planned Parenthood in Texas led to a 35% decline in women on Medicaid starting the most effective methods of birth control and a dramatic 27% spike in births among women who had previously had access to injectable contraception.ⁱⁱ

Defunding Planned Parenthood health centers would have a devastating impact on the Latino/a community itself. In 2014 alone, 23 percent of Planned Parenthood patients were Latino — over half a million people. For many Latinas, regardless of immigration status, Planned Parenthood health centers and other family planning clinics are the only healthcare providers they will see.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Alianza Americas
- American G.I. Forum
- ASPIRA Association
- Avance Inc.
- Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
- Cuban American National Council
- Farmworker Justice
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
- Hispanic Federation
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Inter-University Program for Latino Research
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- Latino Justice PRLDEF
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- MANA, A National Latina Organization
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
- National Association of Hispanic Publications
- NALEO Educational Fund
- National Association of Latino Independent Producers
- National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
- National Council of La Raza
- National Hispana Leadership Institute
- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
- National Hispanic Council on Aging
- National Hispanic Environmental Council
- National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
- National Hispanic Media Coalition
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Institute for Latino Policy
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
- National Puerto Rican Coalition Presente.org
- SER Jobs for Progress National Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
- United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
- United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
- U.S.- Mexico Foundation

Thanks to the ACA, over 4 million Latinos/as were able to gain coverage.ⁱⁱⁱ This and other gains the Latino/a community has seen in terms of healthcare are threatened by a repeal of the ACA. Seventeen million Latinos have gained access to preventive health services without cost sharing,^{iv} including cervical cancer screenings and contraception. Cervical cancer is highly preventable but Latinas have the highest cervical cancer incidence rates nationally.^v Due to the ACA, researchers have found that women under the age of 26 have been diagnosed at earlier stages of cervical cancer.^{vi} Prior to implementation of the contraceptive coverage benefit, 57 percent of Latinas between the ages of 18 to 34 struggled with the cost of prescription contraception,^{vii} a barrier to consistent usage and a factor in unintended pregnancy. Overwhelmingly, Latinos/as support the ACA. In fact, 71 percent of Latino/a registered voters before the 2016 election said that the ACA is working well and should remain as it is or that it is working well and can be improved by decreasing out of pocket costs.^{viii} The ACA has opened the door to meaningful access to affordable, quality, culturally competent health coverage and care, including reproductive healthcare, for Latinos/as.

As members of the Latino community, we will not tolerate any attempts to cut our family and community off from quality, affordable health care and stand with the undersigned organizations to protect this right for Latinos/as and other persons of color. We strongly urge you to oppose all proposals to defund Planned Parenthood health centers and block patients from access to care.

We stand ready to work with you on a replacement plan that precedes any efforts to repeal the ACA and that will build upon the gains of the ACA that our community has experienced. We, the undersigned organizations, believe it is critical for the following priorities be incorporated in a replacement plan if repeal is advanced:

1. Ensure affordability and accessibility of health insurance for all, including federal subsidies for all individuals and support for Medicaid.
2. Maintain the preventive services requirement of the ACA, including those related to women's health care, such as contraception, and the requirement to provide coverage of maternity and newborn care. Additionally, maintain the ACA provisions that have improved access to medications, mental health, opioids, oral health, and chronic disease care, including home health benefits and services.
3. Support patient centered, culturally and linguistically appropriate coordinated care.
4. Support safety net clinics, hospitals, and medical practices with federal Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funding.
5. Expand programs that increase diversity of the Latino health workforce by continuing Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) federal programs for recruitment, training, such as, the National Health Service Corps, and National Institutes of Health (NIH) research initiatives that center the professional development of providers and researchers from communities of color.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ann Marie Benitez, Senior Director of Government Relations, at National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health at annmarie@latinainstitute.org.

Signed,



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National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
Co-Chair, Health Committee, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda



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National Hispanic Medical Association
Co-Chair, Health Committee, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

ⁱ Jennifer Frost et al., Contraceptive Needs and Services, 2012 Update, GUTTMACHER INST. 19-20 (2014), <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/win/contraceptive-needs-2012.pdf> (showing that Texas met only 13 percent of the demand compared to a national total of 31 percent)

ⁱⁱ Stevenson, Amanda J, et al. (2016). "Effect of Removal of Planned Parenthood from the Texas Women's Health Program," *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2016; 374:853-860

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The ACA is Working for the Latino Community. July 21, 2016. <http://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/facts-and-features/fact-sheets/aca-working-latino-community/index.html?language=es>.

^{iv} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, ASPE Data Point. The Affordable Care Act is Improving Access to Preventive Services for Millions of Americans, May 14, 2015; 1. Available at: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/139221/The%20Affordable%20Care%20Act%20is%20Improving%20Access%20to%20Preventive%20Services%20for%20Millions%20of%20Americans.pdf>.

^v Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cervical Cancer Rates by Race and Ethnicity. 2015. <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/statistics/race.htm>. June 16, 2016.

^{vi} Tavernise S. Rise in Early Cervical Cancer Detection is Linked to Affordable Care Act. *New York Times*. Nov. 24, 2015. <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/11/25/health/rise-in-early-cervical-cancer-detection-is-linked-to-affordable-care-act.html?referer=https://t.co/ofQgLQrATM>.

^{vii} Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Survey: Nearly Three in Four Voters in America Support Fully Covering Prescription Birth Control. <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/survey-nearly-three-four-voters-america-support-fully-covering-prescription-birth-control>. Accessed on December 12, 2016.

viii National Council of La Raza and Latino Decisions. Press Briefing: The Views of Latinos on the Economy, Health Care, and the 2016 Election. October 27, 2016.
<http://publications.nclr.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/1641/theviewsoflatinosontheeconomyhealthcareand2016election.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.