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House of Representatives

A TRIBUTE TO JWCH INSTITUTE ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 50th ANNIVERSARY OF PROVIDING QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE TO THE COUNTY'S UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the John Wesley Community Health Institute – also known as the JWCH Institute – on the occasion of the organization's 50th anniversary of providing quality and affordable health care to thousands of uninsured patients throughout Los Angeles.

During my years in Congress, I have had the privilege of working closely with JWCH as well as the other community health centers in my district. I have seen firsthand the important role they play in improving the health of our communities, especially among Latinos, African Americans, the homeless and people with physical and mental health problems.

As a safety-net provider, I am proud to say JWCH is a true leader in this arena.

The Institute was established in 1960 by a group of concerned physicians at the John Wesley County Hospital (JWCH) as a vehicle for obtaining additional funds to support and augment patient care, education, and research. When the hospital was demolished in 1979, medical services and patient education took priority with a refined and expanded focus on community-based health education and social support programs.

Today, the center's mission is being accomplished through a wide variety of programs and activities. In addition to providing primary medical care, the agency's services include: medical outreach and referrals for medical care; HIV services and drug treatment; health education; psychosocial assessment and intervention; family planning services; and research.

Since its inception, JWCH has grown from a very small entity housed in a county building to a \$21 million Federally Qualified Community Health Center. Last year, the private non-profit agency provided 84,191 medical visits to the indigent at 13 locations, including clinics in Skid Row and Bell Gardens in the 34th Congressional District as well as South Los Angeles, East Los Angeles, El Monte, Lynwood and Norwalk.

A recent highlight of this innovative growth, JWCH opened the Center for Community Health last year. Located at 522 S. San Pedro Street in Skid Row, the center is the first fully integrated system of care for homeless persons on the West Coast. The center offers a "one-stop shop" approach to addressing the complex health care needs of homeless individuals and families, which includes providing patients one complete medical record to better ensure a continuum of care.

Madam Speaker, as JWCH prepares to mark its 50-year milestone at a special October 19 anniversary celebration at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Downtown Los Angeles in the 34th Congressional District, I ask my colleagues to please join the Los Angeles community and me in recognizing JWCH for its steadfast commitment to strengthening the safety-net for the county's medically underserved. I also commend JWCH's Board Chair, Cesar Portillo, its Chief Executive Officer, Al Ballesteros and all of the many dedicated people who make this health care organization the safety net that it is today for thousands of Los Angeles County residents.

JWCH provides critical resources and services that enable our community members – including the most hard-to-reach and at-risk patients – to stay healthy and strong, and I wish everyone involved with this fine organization many more years of continued success.