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HEALTH CENTER PARTNERS
of Southern California

Plan Ahead. Take Action. Vote for Health Care.

October 19, 2020

In three weeks, the November 3 general election will arrive with all the energy and intrigue that a race for the presidency brings these days. The actions voters take will reverberate for generations to come — through all branches of government – so it seemed a worthwhile topic to repeat as the election draws closer. Some of you, like me, may have voted already. Yay for us!

With less than 20 days to go, your participation in this election will be crucial. In California alone, residents will approve or reject local and statewide policies that directly affect our day-to-day lives. They'll choose who presides over their city as it recovers from the pandemic and withering economy. They'll pick who speaks for them, their families and communities in Washington, D.C. The presidential contest alone will represent perhaps the starkest choice we've seen between two versions of leadership.

With all this in mind, I encourage you to plan your vote now. It will be very important that you do. Let me tell you why.

Our clinically integrated network, Integrated Health Partners, has been growing by 10,000 patients per month of the newly unemployed and uninsured seeking access to coverage and care at our Community Health Centers. Yet, the Trump Administration's Department of Justice has taken the highly unusual position to refuse to defend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in next month's supreme court challenge, which would displace 23 million Americans from their health care coverage, a right, not a privilege, to say nothing of coverage for pre-existing conditions.

It's a fact that coverage options introduced or strengthened by the ACA, including expanded Medicaid coverage or marketplace plans (e.g., Covered California) have served as an important safety-net for those who have lost coverage as a result of the pandemic. In lieu of the ACA, our government has produced no other option, no alternative health care plan, to put in place for those who would be affected.

And who's on Medicaid, or Medi-Cal, and Covered California? That would be our expectant mothers; our children; our families, friends and neighbors living in poverty; our disabled; our developmentally delayed; and, our parents and grandparents living in

nursing homes. This would include those we interact with regularly who provide our services: food service, personal care, child-care, house cleaning, and home maintenance. I want those around me – all people – to be well and healthy, rather than sick and contagious, because they have access to the care they need. Don't you? The alternative is what keeps me up at night and drives me to work each morning.

If you haven't received your ballot in the mail already, you may call the California Secretary of State's Elections Division staff at (916) 657-2166 or email them here for more information. Returning your ballot by mail? Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked by November 3. No postage is required.

Want to drop off your ballot? Designated drop-off locations will be open through November 3. Ballots returned to a secure ballot drop box must be deposited by 8:00 p.m. on November 3. Only official drop boxes that have been authorized by the state may be used to collect mail-in ballots. Official ballot drop boxes are secured in designated locations and marked with a county seal. If you see what you think might be an unauthorized ballot drop box, don't use it, and instead report it to the county elections office or to the Secretary of State's office at 1-800-345-VOTE or email votesure@sos.ca.gov. Same for anything you witness that just doesn't feel right. See something say something.

To confirm your ballot's status, you may sign up for "Where's My Ballot?" to track your ballot every step of the way. Also, you may choose to receive notifications by email, text or phone call. Save the tab at the top of your ballot with your tracking number to ensure your vote is counted. It's never been easier.

If you prefer to wait and vote in-person, polling places will be open for four days, from October 31 through November 3. But please note, there will be fewer locations than in the past. Plan ahead and check to make sure your polling place hasn't been moved. You may find your polling place by entering your information here. Voting locations offer replacement ballots, accessible voting machines, and language assistance. All polling places will be open on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Plan to get there early, bring a book, some hand sanitizer, and be prepared to wait. Don't forget to stand at least 6' apart and wear your mask!

Finally, many anticipate there will be legal challenges over the results of this election, which is why your participation has never been more crucial. Remember, *"Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting."* F.D.R., 32 President.



Henry N. Tuttle
President and Chief Executive Officer

Health Center Partners of Southern California, a family of companies, includes a 16-membership organization of federally qualified health centers, Indian Health Services Organizations, both urban and sovereign, and Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, collectively serving 850,000+ patients each year, for 3.6 million patient visits each year, at 160 practice sites across San Diego, Riverside, Imperial counties, with the seventh largest provider group in the region. Read our award winning 2018/2019 Impact Report.