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**Council of Community Clinics  
Celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> Year of Health Center Movement**

*Health centers across the US participate in National Health Center Week*

**SAN DIEGO – August 9, 2015** – Community health centers across the nation and in Southern California kick off National Health Center Week, August 9 – 15, 2015. The community-led health care movement started in Massachusetts 50 years ago with the founding of the nation’s first community health center at Columbia Point in Dorchester.

As part of the national celebration, many of the 16 members of the Council of Community Clinics (the Council) in San Diego, Riverside and Imperial Counties will hold local health fairs and events, take to social media and provide tours to members of the regional congressional delegation.

Bruce Hebets, CEO of Borrego Health, stated, “Borrego Health appreciates the efforts of those that came before us and who had a vision 50 years ago in securing funding streams such as Medicaid and Medi-Cal so that organizations like ours could sustain themselves and meet the healthcare needs of the working population. That is why we join arms with other health centers in solidarity and recognize National Health Center Week throughout our nation.”

Kevin Mattson, CEO of San Ysidro Heald Center and Board Chair of the Council, added, “Medicaid has been a lifeline in our community for over 45 years, providing critical, often life-saving access to health care for thousands of our patients. In fact, over 80% of our patients live below the 100% Federal Poverty Level, many of whom struggle to support their families and would go without care if Medicaid was not available. Today, with the expansion of Medicaid in California, nearly 10,000 of our 90,000 patients now have health coverage.”

The first community health center was founded in 1965 at Columbia Point in Dorchester, MA, and spurred a movement to increase the general health of individuals by addressing poverty-causing conditions. Over the last 50 years, innovations that were first introduced at community health centers – such as the development of preventive health services and programs for assisting patients with the management of chronic illnesses -- have become standards of care across the

American health system. There are now over 1,200 community health centers across the U.S. serving residents in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

In 1965, physician activists H. Jack Geiger and Count D. Gibson Jr. recognized social, political and economic challenges greatly impact the overall health of a community. Developing a new model to provide accessible, affordable and high-quality health care, Geiger and Gibson founded two community health centers, the first in the Columbia Point section of Dorchester, MA, and the second in Mound Bayou, MS.

Community health centers expanded nationwide after Senator Edward M. Kennedy visited Columbia Point Health Center in 1966. Impressed with the community-focused model of care, Kennedy introduced an amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act, directing \$51 million in funding for the development of additional health centers across the country. The Council was founded almost 40 years ago to represent and support community clinics and health centers in their efforts to provide access to quality health care and related services for the diverse communities they serve with an emphasis on low income and uninsured populations. The Council's community health centers make up one of the largest primary care networks in California serving more than 725,000 patients, or one in six residents.

For more information on the Council of Community Clinics visit [www.ccc-sd.org](http://www.ccc-sd.org). Follow the Council on [Facebook](#) (at Council of Community Clinics) and on Twitter, [@SDClinics](#). National Health Center Week is supported by the [National Association of Community Health Centers](#) and the California Primary Care Association.

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