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For More Information Contact:
Rebecca Kavoussi at (206) 613-8930

Community Health Network of Washington Celebrates Defeat of I-1033

Remains Concerned About Health Care Funding

Seattle – The Community Health Network of Washington (CHNW) expressed great relief that voters defeated Tim Eyman’s I-1033, which would have made the current health care funding crisis even worse. CHNW worked vigorously to educate voters about the devastating impacts that 1033 would have had on the health care system.

Rebecca Kavoussi, CHNW’s assistant vice president of government affairs, reacted, “This victory is particularly impressive considering we were 20 points down in polling just three months ago. Community health centers (CHCs) across Washington spoke out, wrote, phoned, and donated to ensure the defeat of 1033 and to protect their patients. We’re pleased that our efforts, along with the huge No on I-1033 Campaign coalition, were successful in communicating what a disaster 1033 would have been for our state.”

This outreach effort overcame the context of a tough economy and I-1033’s misleading ballot language, which promised property tax rebates with absolutely no mention of the initiative’s many devastating impacts.

Amidst the celebration of 1033’s defeat, CHNW remains sobered by the current difficult health care reality.

Stated Kavoussi, “Unfortunately, this win just keeps us at the status quo, which is the lowest point that health care funding has been for a long time. We still face an uphill battle in the 2010 legislative session to try to restore some of the major cuts we experienced this year. At least now, however, there is hope that these cuts can be reversed when the economy recovers.”

The community health center (CHC) system suffered approximately \$250 million in cuts in the 2009 state budget. As a result, communities across the state are losing valuable health care workers and health services. Staff at nearly all CHCs across the state will be affected by layoffs, furloughs, or freezes on pay or benefits. Three-quarters of CHCs will be eliminating or reducing key programs and services, such as maternity support programs.

Kavoussi continues, “This outcome proves that Washington voters understand the importance of government funding for critical health care programs such as Basic Health. We’re excited to put this battle behind us and work on moving health care forward.”

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About Community Health Network of Washington:

Community Health Network of Washington is a statewide system of community health centers that exists to ensure all Washingtonians have access to medical care and health insurance. To learn more about the Community Health Network of Washington, go to www.chnwa.org