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Educational Documentary to Inform Public of Cross-Border Health Issues

In response to the lack of knowledge regarding cross-border health, the International Community Foundation and Fundacion Internacional de la Comunidad A.C. are providing an educational documentary to help inform San Diegans about critical health issues affecting both sides of the border.

San Diegans are familiar with the prominent topics regarding border issues, such as immigration and drug enforcement, but little light has been shed on other important issues, like cross-border health. This lack of awareness has significantly affected the health education and disease-prevention services available to citizens in Mexico and the U.S.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately 44 percent of California's foreign population comes from Mexico, creating an increasingly mixed border area. This fusion of cultures has added to the numerous cross-border health challenges, including an increase in infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. In addition to this, the California HealthCare Foundation states that 6.5 million Californians are uninsured, with the Hispanic population making up nearly half of this number.

To help raise awareness of these lesser-known health issues, the International Community Foundation and Fundacion Internacional de la Comunidad A.C created the film "Fragile Lives, Blurring Lines," to improve knowledge of the health challenges faced by people on both sides of the border. The film – introduced at the organizations' second annual gala on Oct. 20 – focuses on the lack of education and support in regard to health care. It also introduces a number of prominent health issues that affect the cross-border population, including childhood obesity, type-2 diabetes and the increase of people at risk for cardiovascular disease.

"The health issues that we are seeing here and across our border are no longer problems that can be defined by lines on a map," said Richard Kiy, president and CEO of the International Community Foundation. "While infectious diseases continue to be a problem, childhood asthma, obesity and diabetes are other issues that are affecting people in Baja-California. 'Fragile Lives, Blurring Lines' is not only setting out to present the problem, but to also teach people how nonprofit organizations are making a difference."

Organizations featured in the film, such as the Mexican Red Cross, Fundacion Codet and Los Niños, are all offering medical and educational services to help those suffering from a lack of quality health care. The San Ysidro Health Center is also doing its part by offering support to Hispanics on the U.S. side of the border.

"These organizations, with the support of the International Community Foundation, are collectively taking steps to better people's lives and tackle the health issues in Mexico, as well as those mirrored

here in the United States,” said Kiy. “Those who would like to help are urged to contact their elected officials to request better legislation regarding cross-border health and increased access to adequate health care.”



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