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NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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April 17, 2012

James Macrae, MA, MPP
Associate Administrator
Bureau of Primary Health Care
Health Resources and Services Administration
Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane, Parklawn Building
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Associate Administrator Macrae:

I am writing in support of reconsideration of the New Access Point application to establish the Kagman Community Health Center in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This application was submitted last year by the CNMI Department of Public Health in partnership with the Kagman Community Health Center Advisory Council, but did not win funding. I understand, however, that the application is among those with sufficiently high scores to be eligible now for reconsideration without the necessity of an entirely new submission.

The Kagman community has little access to, but great need for, expanded health care. There are no health providers in the Kagman area of Saipan, which is the largest island in the CNMI. Many Kagman residents do not own cars; there is no public transportation; and the closest medical facilities are an expensive taxi ride away. Yet, residents of Kagman suffer from serious health problems requiring primary care, including insufficient prenatal care, low birth weights, low rates of immunization, poor oral health care, high teen pregnancy rates, high suicide rates, high rates of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and high alcohol, tobacco and drug use. All these issues could be addressed through a Federally Qualified Health Center.

Despite having applied five times, the Northern Marianas remains the only U.S. jurisdiction without a community health center. In the Pacific, American Samoa and Guam have multiple centers. Even the U.S.-affiliated jurisdictions of Palau and the Marshall Islands have facilities. So, I urge you to include the Kagman Community Health Center among those that the Health Resources and Services Administration reconsiders at this time without need for a new application. Please, provide full and fair consideration of the Kagman application consistent with all applicable law, rules, and regulations.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress