

NEWS

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Mabel Ponce Named Director of the Health Consumer Alliance (HCA)

(Los Angeles)—Mabel Ponce, a long time and respected advocate for health care access for the needy, has been named Director of the Health Consumer Alliance (HCA) whose mission is to help low-income people get essential health care. Ms. Ponce replaces HCA Interim Director Lorraine Jones and will be based in the National Health Law Program's (NHeLP's) Los Angeles office.

"I'm honored to work with an organization that has had a significant impact on healthcare for low-income individuals," said Ms. Ponce. "Advocacy work must be done to ensure people get the care they need, and HCA has been a leader in achieving that for thousands of low-income people in California."

The Health Consumer Alliance, a California partnership of consumer assistance programs and legal services organizations, has served almost 100,000 individuals and families since it was founded in 1999 with support from The California Endowment. These programs serve thirteen counties that are home to more than three-fifths of California's low-income residents.

Ms. Ponce comes to the Health Consumer Alliance with seven years experience in healthcare advocacy at two of its partner organizations. Most recently, Ms. Ponce worked with Health Advocates, LLC in Los Angeles representing low-income uninsured individuals. Ms. Ponce holds a B.A. in Psychology from the Universidad ITESO in Guadalajara, Mexico.

"We are excited to have her as part of the NHeLP family," said NHeLP's executive director, Emily Spitzer. "Having had years of experience as a frontline advocate for HCA clients, Ms. Ponce brings to her leadership role a deep understanding of the complexities our health care system presents people seeking care. She will be a strong new voice in the policy debate about the future of health care in California."

The Alliance provides direct assistance to people seeking help in getting health care and provides extensive consumer information in multiple languages available to all on its Web site www.healthconsumer.org. HCA maintains a database of client problems which is analyzed regularly to identify problems which the alliance addresses through statewide and local policy advocacy.

NHeLP serves as the lead organization of HCA and partnering organizations include the Fresno Health Consumer Center; Health Consumer Center of Imperial Valley; Kern Health Consumer Center; Health Consumer Center of Los Angeles; Orange County Health Consumer Action Center; Health Rights Hotline of Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer and Yolo Counties; Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy of San Diego; Community Health Advocacy Project of San Francisco and Alameda Counties; Health Consumer Center of San Mateo County; and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

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