

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Congresswoman Barbara Lee to
Lead Ground Breaking Ceremony for
Asian Health Services' New Wellness Center at
250 East 18th St., 2nd floor, Oakland, CA

On Saturday, January 16, 2010, 2:00 pm, Congresswoman Barbara Lee will break ground on a new 10 exam room wellness center in East Lake Merritt area. The new Asian Health Service primary care site will employ innovative and integrative models of primary health care with a focus on chronic disease to 5,000 new patients.

"We are delighted to have Congresswoman Lee with us to kick-off this significant expansion of the safety net and of Asian Health Services. When our communities are facing 12% unemployment, loss of health care insurance, foreclosures and reductions in virtually every public service, it is Congresswoman Barbara Lee who boldly champions those in need." said AHS CEO, Sherry Hirota.

"Health care reform will provide more coverage but our health system needs to increase accessible, quality, cost effective and culturally competent care. The stimulus funds for health centers was a strategically well-placed first installment towards this end," Congresswoman Lee told supporters at the AHS annual dinner last September. Since then, the Congresswoman had added an earmark of \$275,000 to the \$950,000 of capital funding AHS received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, to build a new wellness center that will create 33 new health care jobs, put our construction industry to work and deliver much needed health services to the 1,500 patients currently on AHS' waiting list.

On the weekend that our nation celebrates the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Congresswoman Barbara Lee and other supporters of AHS will embrace the right of all Americans to health care by celebrating at the construction site. Once completed, the new site will be named after the late Frank Kiang, founder of the Metropolitan Bank.

The ground breaking ceremony will include remarks by AHS CEO, Sherry Hirota Congresswoman Barbara Lee; State Senator Loni Hancock (invited), State Assemblymember Sandre Swanson (invited), Alameda County Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker, Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums, Oakland City Council Member Pat Kernighan and funders including: Kaiser Permanente, Chevron, the Tides Foundation and Metropolitan Bank.

When fully operational, the clinic will provide additional 20,000 visits to 5,000 patients annually. Currently, AHS provides 90,000 visits to 20,000 patients. The construction

costs of \$1.2 million will provide immediate construction employment at prevailing wage. The projected completion date for construction is the first week of April and the clinic will be in operation by May.

Asian Health Services, a community based primary health care clinic, was founded in 1974 with the mission to serve and advocate for the medically underserved, including the immigrant and refugee Asian community, regard their health rights, and to assure equal access to health care services regardless of income, insurance status, language, or culture. Today AHS serves 20,000 patients, of whom 71% are below the poverty level, with a multilingual staff proficient in nine Asian languages.

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