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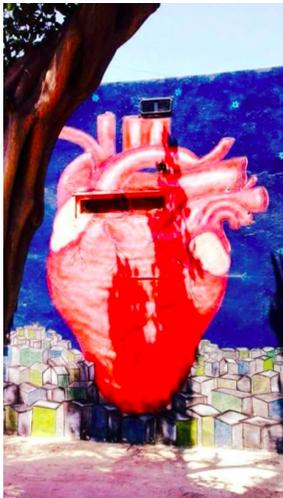
# IMMIGRANT HEALTH EQUITY PROGRAM

## SERVING LOS ANGELES' UNDOCUMENTED AND UNINSURED COMMUNITY

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### OVERVIEW

Al Otro Lado's Los Angeles Office houses our Immigrant Health Equity Program, where we strive to legalize undocumented and uninsured immigrants experiencing medical crisis. Located at the LAC+USC Hospital Wellness Center, our populations of focus include the most vulnerable immigrants in Los Angeles County, including individuals with severe medical complications; those experiencing homelessness; individuals living with HIV/AIDS; those with severe mental illness and survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, and other violent crimes. Uninsured and undocumented patients are unable to access life-saving medical procedures, such as organ transplants. Al Otro Lado screens patients, trains hospital staff on immigration issues, and connects patients to free wraparound legal and medical services. We work with Wellness Center navigators to assist clients with severe health and accessibility issues. Obtaining legal immigration status helps patients access safe, legal employment and other benefits. To many clients, legal status equals self-sufficiency and independence from abusive living environments.



### THE NEED

Los Angeles County is home to around 1 million undocumented residents. Approximately 60% are uninsured, and do not seek medical care until illnesses become emergencies. The LAC+USC Hospital Emergency Department serves as a safety net for this community, receiving around 150,000 patients each year. Our undocumented patients share fears of deportation, too afraid to return for diagnostic studies or to pick up medications. Some vulnerable immigrants avoid accessing primary care and social services, leading to higher rates of hospitalization and poor outcomes. Even when patient has legal status, families with mixed immigration status face stress, economic hardship, and anxiety about separation. Including immigration services in our wraparound approach changes lives for those reluctant to access preventive care. Integrating immigration legal and health services ensures the health, stability, and well-being of the millions of mixed-status LA County families.

### WHAT YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL ACCOMPLISH

- \$10,000** Pays for 1 year of utilities, internet, phone, and printing at our LAC+USC Hospital Office
- \$60,000** Pays for one full-time Legal Assistant, drastically increasing program capacity
- \$90,000** One full-time Attorney to help dozens of clients legalize and access medical care

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#### OUR CLIENTS

Sabrina (not client's real name) was referred to Al Otro Lado's Immigrant Health Equity Program by her specialist at Los Angeles County Hospital. Sabrina is a 25 year-old undocumented woman with severe medical issues. At the time of her appointment with Al Otro Lado, she was homeless and living out of her car with her severely abusive spouse. Sabrina's spouse physically entered the Al Otro Lado attorney office during her appointment and demanded that Sabrina leave.

Al Otro Lado staff were able to safely make contact with Sabrina the following day. She indicated that she wanted to pursue her case and leave her husband as soon as possible. Al Otro Lado quickly located secure, domestic violence-supportive housing for Sabrina and she is now receiving shelter, free comprehensive counseling services, coordinated medical care, and legal representation in her immigration case at a partner domestic violence organization. Sabrina is no longer homeless and no longer being abused.



Al Otro Lado determined that Sabrina is eligible to file a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petition based on the abuse suffered by her spouse. If her application is approved, Sabrina will become a Lawful Permanent Resident (green card-holder). In the interim, she will be allowed to work lawfully in the United States.

Sabrina's attorney is now working with Sabrina and shelter staff to provide comprehensive, trauma-informed, holistic care to Sabrina. As a result of her VAWA eligibility, Sabrina will soon qualify for full-scope, federally-reimbursed Medi-Cal, which will greatly improve her access to quality health care.

Sabrina stated that the reason for her being referred to the Immigrant Health Equity Program was her doctor's concern for her lack of lawful immigration status because it exacerbated her stress levels significantly and impeded her medical treatment. Sabrina was happy to find out that she can also qualify

for federal student loans as a VAWA self-petitioner and go back to school.