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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

El Centro de Corazón Receives Health Justice Award from The Root Cause Coalition

Washington D.C. — El Centro de Corazón has been awarded The Root Cause Coalition’s 2023 Health Justice Award. In its second year, the Health Justice Award recognizes organizations that have successfully implemented a program or intervention to reduce health disparities. This marks a significant way for the Coalition to elevate the efforts of an organization doing critical work to address the social determinants of health and related gaps in health outcomes.

As part of the award, El Centro de Corazón (El Centro) will receive \$25,000 to continue to serve Houston’s East End community through its Children’s Wellness Program and Behavioral Health Care visits. The organization will also be formally recognized at the Coalition’s 8th Annual National Summit on the Social Determinants of Health in Kansas City on December 4, 2023.

“On behalf of our patients, staff and board, El Centro de Corazón is humbled to receive the Health Justice Award by The Root Cause Coalition. El Centro offers its voice to continue collaborating across various areas to advance health equity and justice in Houston’s East End community; to be recognized by The Root Cause Coalition is a tremendous honor,” said El Centro de Corazón CEO Marcie Mir.

Founded in 1994, El Centro is a renowned Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) with three locations in Houston’s East End. El Centro offers a comprehensive range of adult and pediatric health care services for the underserved, uninsured and underinsured—including primary care and family medicine, women’s health, and dental and behavioral health services. El Centro assists patients in overcoming barriers to health care access, addresses food insecurity and provides interventions that target social determinants of health (SDOH). In 2022, El Centro provided direct patient care to 12,471 low-income children and adults for a total of 46,991

patient visits. El Centro's mission is to be the leader in improving the well-being of the communities it serves through the provision of quality health care and the delivery of innovative programs and a vision to be the cornerstone of a healthier community.

"We are delighted to recognize the work of El Centro de Corazón and applaud the organization's tremendous model of delivering health care that includes ensuring an individual's most basic needs are met," said Barbara Petee, President of the Coalition. "El Centro's model of care delivery exemplifies the comprehensive model that all citizens should have to ensure easy access and affordability to health care that, in turn, allows all individuals to achieve their best self."

El Centro has created a stronger, healthier East End community by addressing social determinants of health with effective interventions that influence population health and have had a significant impact on food insecurity. Its internal capacity to address food and nutrition insecurity among its patients and area residents is strengthened by collaborative efforts that ensure quality, nutritious food for those in need, building resiliency, reinforcing community cohesion, enhancing community appearance, and improving the health of its low-income constituents, including 17 inner-city school-based gardens; 215 pounds of fresh produce distributed to El Centro patients and community members; 47 enrollees receiving weekly bags of fresh produce as well as nutrition education, counseling and ongoing support; 840 fresh produce boxes delivered to 70 participants on a bi-weekly basis; and 60 \$100 gift cards distributed to program participants.

The Root Cause Coalition also recognizes the many innovative and thoughtful submissions for the Health Justice award: Matter Health; Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital, The Potocsnak Family Division of Adolescent & Young Adult Medicine; Credit Builders Alliance; Progressive Community Health Centers; Children's Minnesota; and Siena Francis House.

This award is generously supported by Aetna, a CVS Health company.

About The Root Cause Coalition

Founded in 2015, The Root Cause Coalition is a non-profit member-driven organization comprised of more than 80 leading health systems, hospital associations, foundations, businesses, national and community nonprofits, health insurers, academic institutions, local governments, and policy centers. Our common goal is to achieve health equity for every American.