

July 6, 2021

Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia
Honorable Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, Council District 9
Honorable Members of the Long Beach City Council

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Members of the City Council,

It is our honor to submit this letter as our recommendation to name the newly renovated Health Department facility located at Houghton Park the “Ronald R. Arias Health Equity Center.”

Ronald R. Arias (Ron), a longtime Uptown Long Beach resident, is a public health champion who has dedicated his career and personal life to social justice, youth development and better health outcomes for all. Ron served in leadership of our City’s Health Department for more than 22 years, with 12 of those years at the forefront as Department Director.

Under his guidance, the Health Department had many policy and programming accomplishments including the passage of the City’s first no-smoking ordinance becoming one of the first in the state to ban smoking in public places, restaurants and bars, the development and opening of the Miller Family Health Education Center which is equipped with integrated language interpretation equipment to promote a healthy city for our diverse community, the creation of the City’s Healthy Beverage and Snack Policy, and securing the more than \$1 million investment into North Long Beach by Kaiser Permanente through the Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL) Zone Initiative whose main activities were focused at Houghton Park and the surrounding neighborhoods. Ron’s vision over the years for a healthy and equitable city has allowed Long Beach, but particularly North Long Beach, to be at the forefront of improving health inequities through policy and systems change.

The renovated and expanded Ronald R. Arias Health Equity Center will include a new health clinic, conference rooms and learning workshop areas, and will house the violence prevention, youth development, reentry and human dignity, family preservation and fatherhood programming staff from the Health Department in addition to partnerships with other agencies and community organizations. This updated facility will be the perfect complement to the Dori Topsy-Elvord Community Center located right next door within Houghton Park. Both sites will provide needed community space, services and programs for youth, seniors, and families.

Today, Ron continues to volunteer much of his time and efforts to various organizations and causes throughout Long Beach including the TCC Family Health Community Advisory Committee, the Earl B. and Loraine H. Miller Foundation, the Rancho Los Cerritos Foundation, and the Long Beach Latino Cultural Center steering committee. He is a true example of an advocate, mentor, and compassionate leader, and was recently awarded the Key to the City this past March for his tireless work and commitment to strengthening our city’s community health.

We, the undersigned, are thrilled to endorse the naming of the health facility at Houghton Park to be the “Ronald R. Arias Health Equity Center” to honor Ron’s professional accomplishments in the public health field, his unwavering commitment to our entire city’s well-being, and his continued dedication to creating a thriving and more vibrant Long Beach for all.

Respectfully,

Steering Committee Members

Hon. Steven Neal

Susana Gonzalez Edmond
Vice President, Mercury Public Affairs and Centro CHA Board Member

Mario Gonzalez
President, Centro CHA Board of Directors

Jessica Quintana
Executive Director, Centro CHA

Shawna Herrera Stevens
Principal, SHS Connections

Community Leaders

Irma Archuleta
Community Leader

Phyllis Arias
Civil Service Commissioner and Retired Long Beach City College Faculty

Dr. Juan M. Benitez
Board Member, Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) Board of Education

Rene Castro
Community Leader

Herlinda Chico
Vice President, Long Beach Community College District (LBCCD) Board of Trustees

Celine Cordero
Senior Vice President, EKA

Martha Cota
Executive Director, Latinos in Action California

Elvia Delgadillo
Retired Employee, City of Long Beach

Nubia Flores
Chair, Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities

Ron Herrera
Community Leader

Megan Kerr
Vice President, Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) Board of Education

Theresa Marino
Retired Employee, City of Long Beach and Former Board Member of Centro CHA

Luis Navarro
President, Navarro Hospitality Group

Elisa Nicholas, MD, MSPH
CEO, TCC Family Health

Uduak-Joe Ntuk
President, Long Beach Community College District (LBCCD) Board of Trustees

Carmen Perez
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Jeff Rowe
President, Neyham Neighborhood Association

Henry Taboada
Former Long Beach City Manager

Silissa Uriarte-Smith
360 Collaborative Solutions

Armando Vasquez, PhD
Professor, California State University, Long Beach