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COMMITTEES
CHAIR: UTILITIES AND ENERGY
BUDGET
COMMUNICATIONS AND CONVEYANCE
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
HUMAN SERVICES

September 26, 2023

Board President Evett PerezGil
Desert Healthcare District and Foundation
1140 N. Indian Canyon Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Re: Dr. Conrado Bárzaga's Reinstatement as CEO, Desert Health Care District and Foundation

Board President PerezGil,

With great urgency, we join the voices of deeply concerned community members calling for the reinstatement of Dr. Conrado Bárzaga as CEO of the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation (District). Dr. Bárzaga served our regional healthcare district with distinction, transforming our Coachella Valley's healthcare landscape and placing us on a path for increased accessibility and equity. We are alarmed by the lack of transparency and the potential consequences to service and operations that may be caused by such an abrupt upheaval. The public deserves an explanation accounting for this upset. Dr. Bárzaga's record of accomplishment and unparalleled public service is undeniable and we cannot fathom any rational justifying his removal. With the interest and priorities of our community mind, we urge the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation Board of Directors (Board) to better respect those they are entrusted to represent, rectify this mistake, and reinstate Dr. Bárzaga.

Dr. Bárzaga's steady leadership has shepherded our Coachella Valley through unprecedented hardships and public health crises. His proactive, collaborative response in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic helped to curb infection rates and save lives. Mobilizing community partners allowed the District to maximize local testing, vaccine, and other resource distribution efficiencies. The State of California looked to the methods implemented by Dr. Bárzaga in the District's pandemic response as a model to reach underserved, high-risk communities. Establishing this emergency response infrastructure prepared our region to better face other incoming emergencies such as monkeypox, opioid overdose, mental health, and the growing housing and food insecurity issues.

Dr. Bárzaga's clear vision and understanding of the Coachella Valley's needs fortified our regional healthcare system's foundation and improved medical service delivery. In the past four years, Dr. Bárzaga has successfully leveraged millions in resources to initiate vital local health initiatives with multi-agency and community partners tackling urgent public health issues, and prioritizing the needs of our most vulnerable residents. Notably, the District established a mobile clinic providing service to thousands including farmworkers and the unhoused who would otherwise go without medical care. Dr. Bárzaga has earned our community's trust and is responsible for developing key stakeholder relationships, positioning

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the District as a regional resource and action convener. His methods have proven successful and his achievements have been widely recognized.

The loss of Dr. B rzsaga would be devastating to our region, setting back the momentous strides toward greater healthcare access, wellness, and equity achieved through his stewardship. In addition to operation disruptions and deviation from goals, the District is at risk of incurring detrimental damage to public trust if they do not provide more communication and transparency regarding their decisions. On behalf of my constituents, we urge you to make this right and support the reinstatement of Dr. B rzsaga as CEO of the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation. Please contact me at (916) 319-2036 for any questions regarding this critical matter or our unwavering support for Dr. B rzsaga.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eduardo Garcia", is written over a horizontal line.

Eduardo Garcia
Assemblymember, 36th District

cc: DHCD Board Members
Board Vice-President Carmina Zavala, PysD
Board Secretary Carole Rogers, RN
Board Treasurer Arthur Shorr
Board Member Leticia De Lara, MPA
Board Member Les Zendle, MD
Board Member Kimberly Barraza