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SUN LIFE FAMILY HEALTH CENTER

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Press Release

Despite State's 18% Cut to Critical Programs, Sun Life's CEO Leads through Economic Crisis

CASA GRANDE, AZ: In the haze of economic turmoil Pinal County residents embrace Sun Life's health care model that is enduring the State's staggering 18% cut to critical programs. The State's cutbacks directly affect the AZDHS Primary Care Program that funds Sun life's sliding fee program. The funds subsidized the county's largest health care provider's unique approach to safeguard all county residents' access to affordable quality primary care, regardless of economic or insurance status.

The increase in the county's population throughout the last five years raised the number of underinsured and uninsured persons to over 90,000. In addition, during the last two years growing unemployment rates and declining coverage to insured patients' care added to the demand for the sliding fee service by 24%. Throughout 2008 Sun Life's medical staff experienced additional changes within patient populations. The diagnosis of patients with diabetes increased 60%; patients diagnosed with hypertension increased 52%; 58% rise in cervical cancer; an increase of 32% in abnormal breast findings; 91% increase in prenatal conditions; and an increase of 59% in the treatment of asthma, among many other health conditions.

"Despite the State's recent 18% cuts to critical programs, rising unemployment, reduction in coverage to the insured, and increased economic chaos, Sun Life is moving ahead with plans to expand the present facilities in Eloy, Maricopa and Casa Grande, and looks to add new locations in Florence and Southeast Pinal County," said Travis Robinette, Sun Life's CEO. In a recent address to county stakeholders, Robinette explained, Sun Life's primary goal is to improve access to affordable quality coverage by increasing: facilities, technological capacity, transportation resources, and prevention & research efforts. The resources to accomplish the goals exist within the U.S. Health and Human Services' Health Care and Other Facilities Program and the Office of Health Information Technology. The financing options are non-competitive and specifically designated by Congress each year in the annual budget.

"In order to accomplish our goal to rid Pinal residents of the disparities that exist within the health care system, Sun Life needs cooperative collaboration between employers, individuals, providers, and community," expressed Robinette. Without external stakeholders Pinal County residents' will be at a loss with limited or no access to health coverage, skyrocketing prices, and limited or no access to quality care. Olivia Guerrero, CEO of Pinal/Gila Council for Senior Citizens, agrees with Robinette and offered the organization's support to Sun life's efforts. "If Sun Life is leading the charge for health care then we will support them in their efforts because they have always been there caring for our senior citizens in Pinal County."

Sun Life's *Call to Action*, and the organization's leadership through turbulent times, comes at a time when the President and the Congress recognize the importance of expanded health coverage, and limiting waste and abuse. The Honorable Max Baucus (2008), Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, explained, "*Society, through state and Federal governments, should help those who lack the means to buy insurance on their own and ensure that the insurance market is fair and transparent.*"

"Sun Life seeks to provide tax payers with tangible results for their investment," said Robinette. "Within those results taxpayers will see: 1) Increased services and health coverage for all Pinal County residents, regardless of their economic or insurance status; 2) Lower costs for care; 3) Improved billing accuracy, reduce duplications of services, improved access to medical records; 4) Increased transportation resources for residents in remote locations of the County; and 5) Research and Prevention efforts to increase the over-all health of persons during a life-span."