

For Immediate Release

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Global Links Hosts Cuban Delegate September 21-24

**Allegheny County, Pittsburgh City Council to award proclamations honoring
Global Links' 25 years of humanitarian work in Cuba**

Delegate to visit local hospitals to strengthen partnerships, share expertise

(PITTSBURGH) September 20, 2019 – Global Links will mark 25 years of humanitarian efforts in Cuba by hosting Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) Representative Justo Manuel Cardenas Rodriguez, who specializes in the coordination of natural disaster emergency response within PAHO-Cuba, as well as in other agencies within the U.N. in Cuba, September 21-24. During the visit, Pittsburgh City Council and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald will present proclamations honoring Global Links' quarter century of leadership providing long-term medical aid in Cuba and recognizing the strong ties that have been forged with PAHO/WHO.

Global Links is the only nonprofit in Pittsburgh, and one of only a few in the United States, to have a fully licensed partnership from both the United States and Cuban governments to collaborate on humanitarian efforts in the health sector. Recent work in Cuba includes recovery efforts to furnish and equip hospital wards damaged by hurricanes, including Hurricane Irma in 2017; provision of wheelchairs and walkers for seniors and basic medical supplies for Cuban medical students who travel to remote communities to provide care; and dialysis equipment.

Mr. Rodriguez's visit will strengthen partnerships with Western Pennsylvania hospitals participating in Global Links' medical surplus recovery programs, and present opportunities to share learning and best practices around improving healthcare, with a specific focus on maternal health. Reducing maternal mortality, an issue of global concern, is also a significant focus for health leaders in Pittsburgh and across Pennsylvania, where pregnancy-related deaths have risen over the last 20 years.

Mr. Rodriguez's **Itinerary** will include visits to the **Midwife Center for Birth & Women's Health, UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital** and **Magee-Womens Research Institute**.

"We are delighted to welcome Mr. Rodriguez to Pittsburgh, and for the opportunity to discuss in person ways we can continue to strengthen collaborations between our local hospitals' surplus recovery efforts and the ongoing product shortages that the Cubans face due to the embargo. Essential products that we take for granted: exam gloves, sutures, IV supplies, thermometers and wheelchairs are just a few of the medical products that are in short supply in Cuba," says Global Links Executive Director Angela Garcia. "Not only will our guests

visit the hospitals that are participating in our surplus recovery programs, we will have opportunities to share and discuss strategies and best practices around shared health priorities such as treating diabetic foot ulcers, and around the pressing need to decrease maternal mortality rates here in Pittsburgh. “

“Many in the U.S. are not aware that Cuba has pioneered many medical treatments that are impacting patients around the world, but that are not available in the United States at this time. These include a breakthrough lung cancer treatment and vaccine, and a biotech treatment for preventing diabetic foot ulcers that reduces the risk of amputation by over 70 percent,” adds Garcia. “There is much we can learn from each other and we look forward to another 25 years of collaboration and partnership.”

"I'm thrilled that Pittsburgh is hosting this visit, and that our hospital community is extending its hand in friendship to the Cuban community. And I want to thank Global Links for continuing to show its national leadership in providing medical relief to the country, which is something our city should be very proud of," Mayor William Peduto said.

About Global Links

Global Links is a nonprofit medical relief and development organization dedicated to supporting health improvement initiatives in resource-poor communities locally and globally. Global Links collaborates with US healthcare institutions and the Western Pennsylvania community to recover hundreds of tons of high-quality surplus medical materials and home healthcare items every year that would otherwise be discarded. These materials are shared with public health facilities around the world and with local, western Pennsylvania nonprofit and safety net organizations that provide care for their community's most vulnerable people.

*In 2018 alone, Global Links recovered more than **261 tons** of medical materials and supplies that would have been discarded, provided more than **\$3 million** worth of international medical aid to 55 healthcare facilities in seven countries, and provided support to **30+ local organizations** in Western Pennsylvania, including Operation Safety Net, Dress for Success, CONNECT Community Paramedic Program, Jeremiah's Place and more.*

For more information, visit www.globallinks.org.

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Global Links. Sharing Surplus. Saving Lives.