



MENDEZ NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TRANSPLANTATION DEBUTS *FIXING PACO*

AT PREMIERE SCREENING AND FUNDRAISING EVENT

Fixing Paco, Aims at Providing Culturally Relevant Edutainment on Organ Transplantation

LOS ANGELES (October 10, 2012) – The Mendez National Institute of Transplantation (MNIT) celebrated the premiere of *Fixing Paco* yesterday at the Directors Guild of America. The star studded event included *Fixing Paco* cast, Emmy-winning actress Marabina Jaimes, Gloria Garayua, Latin pop sensation Christian Chavez, Soledad St. Hilaire, Alfredo Ávila, Ingrid Oliu, Carolyn Wilson, Alfonso di Luca, Emil-Bastien Bouffard, Adrian Gonzales and Miriam Peniche. Also in attendance were actors Benito Martinez, Maria Beck, Jossara Jinaro and Maria Henley among others.

Fixing Paco is a telenovela-style series that follows the fictional Fuentes family's triumph in battling kidney failure. Each episode informs dialysis patients and their families on the treatment option of transplantation, living donation, and being proactive regarding their health. *Fixing Paco* was filmed in both Spanish and English and is a result of lessons learned from providing MNIT's One-on-One Program to dialysis patients.

Following the premiere the Mendez National Institute of Transplantation honored Julia and Frank Sanchez at a dinner gala recognizing their tremendous support to MNIT and the community. Ron Taubman, a transplant recipient who is an active volunteer in kidney disease and transplant organizations, was also honored at the event.

"We are excited for the release and distribution of *Fixing Paco*, it is our goal that it will help debunk myths and misconceptions about transplantation and living donation within the Latino community," said Nicole Mendez Pinkerton, Director of Development and Education at the MNIT and Executive Producer of *Fixing Paco*. "Transplantation can provide a significantly better quality of life, however, there is a dire need for culturally relevant informational health materials and *Fixing Paco* will help meet that need."

Fixing Paco was created in this edutainment format to effectively communicate essential information that patients on dialysis desperately need to know. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), almost half of the patients on the waiting list for a transplant in the greater Los Angeles area are Latino. Diabetes and high blood pressure are the main culprits, making kidneys the organ most in need in this community. And at a national level, there are more than 20,000 Latinos currently awaiting an organ transplant.

Margie Fuentes (Gloria Garayua), a peppy young adult and aspiring doctor, deals with the stress of her father's kidney failure by video blogging. Her father, Paco (Paul Rodriguez) struggles with dialysis. Not only is his health failing, but so is his handyman business. Fortunately for Paco, he has the support of his family to help him get through the ups and downs. *Fixing Paco* shows the Fuentes family vulnerabilities but importantly highlights their strength and determination that ultimately helps them prevail. *Fixing Paco* delivers some heart wrenching and powerful performances by Paul Rodriguez, Emmy-winning actress Marabina Jaimes, Soledad St. Hilaire and Ingrid Oliu, Tia Julia's downtrodden daughter, Daisy.

"I am proud of the show because it will teach a part of the Latino community the importance of taking care of their kidneys' and following the proper medical advice given to them. The information presented is palatable and universal and is accessible to all cultures that might come across the show on the web," said Joe Camareno, award-winning Director and Producer of *Fixing Paco*. "It is a story of family with a huge heart and a powerful message of hope and options available to the dialysis community."

Fixing Paco was produced by The Mendez National Institute of Transplantation in association with Celtino Entertainment, and was made possible by a generous grant from the UniHealth Foundation. *Fixing Paco* won 2012 Best Webisode at the Reel Raquache Art & Film Festival in East Los Angeles. *Fixing Paco* will be available on the internet as a web series to provide worldwide access to education about kidney transplantation and living donation.

For more information on *Fixing Paco* visit www.FixingPaco.org or the Mendez National Institute of Transplantation visit www.transplantation.com. Follow *Fixing Paco* on [Facebook/FixingPaco](https://www.facebook.com/FixingPaco) and on Twitter [@FixingPaco](https://twitter.com/FixingPaco).

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ABOUT MENDEZ NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TRANSPLANTATION (MNIT)

The Mendez National Institute of Transplantation (MNIT) is a public non-profit organization founded in 1984, dedicated to its founding mission: To advance the science and practice of organ transplantation through research, education, and innovation. www.transplantation.com