

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, DC 20500  
FAX: 202-456-2461

**URGENT**

September 8, 2009

Dear Mr. President:

A young man named Eric died for his country on July 4, 2009.

I am writing to make sure you know of his sacrifice.

Eric De La Cruz died while awaiting a heart transplant that was denied and delayed because he could not get insurance because of a pre-existing condition. Despite five years of desperate attempts by his courageous mother and sister – a family that has been bankrupted twice by other medical bills – Eric died. Despite a remarkable online campaign that attracted thousands of supporters from all over the world and nearly a million dollars to pay his uncovered medical expenses, Eric died. And despite repeated pleas for help to those whose hands were tied by the system, Eric died.

His story is both grippingly real and shockingly common. The pain and suffering his family has endured at the hands of a failing health care system are immense. But the way in which his supporters and family have carried on his fight for meaningful reform of the U. S. insurance and health care industry is dramatic and uniquely American.

I implore you to read his story, which is attached. Then, I urge you – by sharing his experience – to allow Eric to help you make a strong health care reform bill a reality. Please consider meeting his sister and hearing his story first-hand. Health care reform will unfortunately arrive too late for him. But it is not too late for thousands of others in the same situation today.

Please don't delay. The American public will rally around Eric's story. I have seen it a thousand times over already. Ask Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who recently lauded Eric's strength and cited his case as emblematic of the need for reform.

Don't let an amazing story of courage and dignity – and the quintessential example of why health care reform is needed – idle silently while the battle for health care gets mired in statistics and dollar signs, in desperate need of a human face to remind people what is really at stake.

A true story like this will make the difference.

Respectfully,

*Call 773-469-5027 or email [info@welopeeric.com](mailto:info@welopeeric.com) for more information or to get in contact with the De La Cruz family.*

# Presenting A Dramatic Case for Health Care Reform for Review and Use by President Barack Obama

A REAL STORY OF WHY WE NEED STRONG HEALTH CARE REFORM



## Pass Health Care Reform For Eric De La Cruz



Eric De La Cruz was a young Nevada resident who was diagnosed five years ago with severe dilated cardiomyopathy, a serious heart condition which typically leads to the need for a heart transplant.

The problem? Because of this pre-existing condition, and because his employer did not offer insurance, Eric was unable to get health care coverage for his condition.

Although Eric was eventually moved to California hospital with a transplant program, accepted for treatment and placed high atop the transplant list as a status 1A candidate, his doctors commented that he likely arrived “two years too late.” Indeed, the years-long delay in his admission to a transplant facility – largely due to the lack of affordable insurance – had rendered Eric too weak to undergo the transplant he needed.

Sadly, five years after being diagnosed and after months of courageous struggle in the hospital, Eric De La Cruz passed away on July 4, 2009 from complications related to his heart ailment and subsequent surgery.



So, Eric got gradually worse. Five years chasing Medicare disability did not yield results and no private insurer would offer Eric affordable, adequate coverage that could pay for his treatment. And so, in May of 2009, Eric found himself tangled in health care red tape in a Las Vegas hospital, essentially excluded from the system.

Eric’s sister, Veronica De La Cruz, herself a television news journalist and former CNN anchor, took her brother’s plight public and rallied the support of thousands of total strangers through a remarkable online campaign. In addition to applying public pressure and media attention to help resolve his Medicare coverage, she – with the help of everyday Americans and celebrities like the band *Nine Inch Nails* – raised nearly \$1 million to help pay for medical costs. Most importantly she cast a bright spotlight on glaring holes in our current system which exclude people with pre-existing conditions and those who cannot afford the spiraling costs of health care and insurance.

**“No one should  
have to go  
through the  
red tape we did.  
Not when a  
life is at stake.”**

Though his suffering is over, his battle is not. His family and thousands of his supporters have vowed to continue to fight for the lives of an untold number of other Americans who may also lose their lives because of flaws in the U. S. health care system.

Veronica De La Cruz and the supporters she organized have created petitions, web sites and grassroots communications to advocate for Eric’s treatment. Those efforts will now be shifted to advocate for the rights of all those uninsured or under-insured Americans who face the same obstacles. The first step in this process is the passage this year of a health care reform bill that makes it illegal for insurers to deny or drop coverage due to pre-existing conditions and that includes public plan options. Please think of Eric De La Cruz when telling America – and Congress – that health care reform is about more than politics. It is about a basic human right.

### HOW ERIC DE LA CRUZ CAN SUPPORT PASSAGE OF REAL HEALTH CARE REFORM:

#### **MEDIA EXPOSURE**

Dozens of media outlets have picked up on Eric’s story, Veronica’s courageous fight for reform, and Congress’ support of their mission.

#### **GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT**

Tens of thousands of people are already mobilized to lobby their elected officials on Eric’s behalf.

#### **A COMPELLING VOICE**

Veronica De La Cruz is willing to speak wherever and whenever she needs to in order to show how health care reform could be saving lives.

In addition to thousands of supporters Eric’s story has reached online, those who already know about and support Eric De La Cruz’s cause in Congress include: Majority Leader Sen. *Harry Reid*, Speaker *Nancy Pelosi*, Rep. *Jan Schakowsky*, Sen. *Charles Schumer*, Sen. *Dick Durbin*, Sen. *Kirsten Gillibrand* and others.

**FOR INFORMATION ON ERIC DE LA CRUZ, CALL 773-469-5027 OR EMAIL [INFO@WELOVEERIC.COM](mailto:INFO@WELOVEERIC.COM)**