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**NPRC DEMANDS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO EASE THE
SUFFERING OF AMERICANS IN PUERTO RICO**

Washington, DC – The National Puerto Rican Coalition Inc. (NPRC) today demanded the Department of Defense, Congress, and the Obama Administration to reevaluate their position around assisting the Americans living in Vieques. A two day news report on CNN titled “Poisoned Paradise” reported that the mortality rate in Vieques reflects a 30% chance of dying from cancer, 45% from diabetes, 95% from liver disease, and an amazing 381% from hypertension.

“Puerto Rico’s healthcare system is facing a crisis due to decades of federal funding neglect. On top of that the population of Vieques, a small island off the east coast of Puerto Rico, is suffering from high incidences of cancer and other fatal illnesses due to the toxic environment left by the U.S. Navy. There certainly is no Honor in ignoring pain, no Courage in abandoning people, and no Commitment in neglecting obligations. The Navy needs to uphold its values,” declared Rafael A. Fantauzzi, President & CEO of the National Puerto Rican Coalition.”

The current slowdown on healthcare reform aggravates the issue. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, but the island is not treated as a state of the union when it comes to funding. “The current disparities in Medicare and Medicaid affect the vulnerable population of Vieques, that’s why congress and the administration must rectify these disparities. This is not America; this is something out of a horror fiction novel.” said Fantauzzi.

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About NPRC

NPRC's mission is to systematically strengthen and enhance the social, political, and economic well-being of Puerto Ricans throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico with a special focus on the most vulnerable.