

SOMOS offers to send 200 doctors to the border

SOMOS Community Care, a nonprofit, physician-led network, is offering to send 200 Spanish-speaking doctors to the U.S.–Mexico border amid migrant deaths in border patrol custody.

Board chair Dr. Ramon Tallaj said in a letter addressed to President Donald Trump and Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen that culturally competent health care at the border can prevent deaths.

"It's critical that those in crisis can easily and effectively communicate with health care providers in their own language, and that is why I am offering 200 Spanish-speaking doctors to President Trump and Secretary Nielsen," Tallaj said in a statement. "These doctors are both general practitioners and expert specialists and are trained in crisis protocols."

SOMOS deployed dozens of doctors to Puerto Rico immediately after Hurricane Maria. It recently partnered with Gov. Andrew Cuomo to provide health care to undocumented immigrant children who have been separated from their families. Through Project Golden Door, SOMOS is addressing a critical period of time when physical and mental health care may go unaddressed before these children have benefits in place.

As for migrants in need of care at the border, Tallaj wrote: "Most of the vulnerable refugees fleeing persistent crisis in their home countries are at the border seeking relief, safety and opportunity. ... My family and I, and the doctors in the network I lead, have done the same." —J.H.