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SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF AB 2599 TO FUND OPERATION OF NEW MLK HOSPITAL

LOS ANGELES — Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas today hailed the passage of Assembly Bill 2599 as another significant step in the effort to open a new Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital.

“With passage of AB 2599, I am pleased that the legislature has codified the State’s commitment to the University of California (UC) and the County of Los Angeles to provide financial support for the hospital,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “Passage of AB 2599 continues the momentum toward restoring in-patient services to underserved residents in the Watts-Willowbrook area by the new MLK Hospital.”

Since assuming office in December, 2008, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas has led the County’s effort to develop options to provide much needed hospital and clinical services at the MLK Hospital site, following its closure in August 2007.

At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, the County approached the UC to assist in this effort, successfully working with Governor Schwarzenegger’s office to negotiate a plan to open a new private nonprofit MLK Hospital Medical Center as a viable health care facility.

“Healthcare financing is a complicated issue. AB 2599 is a critical fiscal building block that helps insure the new MLK Hospital’s viability,” the Supervisor said.

The agreement requires the Department of Health Care Services and the California Medical Assistance Commission to ensure Medi-Cal funding for the new private nonprofit MLK Hospital Medical Center.

The new hospital will be governed by a seven-member board of directors and no longer run by the County. The members, recently confirmed by the Board of Supervisors, consist of two appointees made by the University of California; two made by the County of L.A.; and three made jointly by UC System and the County.

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