

March 18, 2009

Regent Sherry Lansing
Chairwoman, Committee on Health Services
University of California Board of Regents
Office of the Secretary
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Chairwoman Lansing:

When we talked last week about the agreement between the University of California and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on the framework for establishing a new Martin Luther King hospital, I noted how significant this development was for the residents of my district and the County as a whole. The framework and the work that went into its development reflect a joint commitment to make something very positive happen for the hospital's surrounding community on terms that benefit both organizations.

I believe the framework being discussed by your Board begins to address the most vexing issues regarding the relationship between the County and University in the establishment, financing and operation of the new hospital. I hope the Regents will enthusiastically support our ongoing joint efforts to open a new, 120 bed hospital that delivers the highest quality patient care and reinforces a badly frayed safety net.

The matter of health care in LA County is urgent. Therefore, the announcement of this proposal marks a significant step toward providing quality patient care at a new Martin Luther King hospital. The public-private partnership approach we are taking is prudent, feasible, scalable and potentially catalytic in ways that improve the health care outcomes in the region. I commend Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, his administration and the University of California Office of the President for their hard and diligent work. I am hopeful that any remaining details can be successfully resolved in a timely manner.

We should be mindful that development of a new Martin Luther King hospital devoted to the delivery of quality patient care is happening against the backdrop of a national discussion about health care reform, universal health care access, health information technology, cost containment, disease management and preventive care. This moment can be transformative in ways we have yet to imagine by contributing to the economic and social health of the region as well.

The announcement of the framework itself and the prospect of opening a new hospital to service the needs of South Los Angeles and the broader County of Los Angeles have already generated enormous optimism and good will. It has also generated interest from

a range of health care providers, business owners, academic institutions, philanthropic leaders, and developer interests from across the Southland.

My office is engaging the Urban Land Institute to establish a Technical Advisory Panel of experts representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines to discuss the economic development possibilities associated with this 38 acre site. The Urban Land Institute has a record of facilitating the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers in a manner that can benefit the process of re-envisioning this facility and campus as a magnet for job creation, health care workforce preparation and training, entrepreneurship, economic development and medical research as well as the delivery of health services.

I am convinced our continued work has the potential to catalyze and develop a comprehensive, integrated plan for regional health care delivery in which the University will have additional opportunities to pursue its mission of education, research and public service. There is much work yet to be done. Time is of the essence as communities with very deserving patients impatiently await the opening of this facility.

I am confident, however, that we will succeed with the continued leadership and active engagement of the President of your Board, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and his administration, and the Board of Regents through the very capable direction of UC President Mark Yudof and Vice President John Stobo.

I deeply appreciate their commitment and commend them for their efforts. I strongly urge the University's active support of this initiative and pledge my own commitment to bring to successful fruition the promise embodied by this framework and to win the broad public support necessary for its implementation.

With hope,

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Supervisor, Second District

cc: Members, UC Board of Regents