



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS TO LEAD STAKEHOLDERS AT UC REGENTS MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO TO URGE UNIVERSITY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH AGREEMENT WITH L.A. COUNTY**

**LOS ANGELES** – Building on a groundswell of community support for a new Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and a cross-section of stakeholders will testify Thursday at a meeting in San Francisco of the University of California Board of Regents in favor of a deal under which the UC would provide physician services for the hospital.

Testifying at the informational hearing will be health care providers as well as other business, community and labor groups. The UC Regents could vote on a proposed deal with the county as early as their meeting in Los Angeles in mid-November.

“The breadth of support from stakeholders who will attend Thursday’s meeting underscores the mounting support for the Regents to take action,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “Ninety-percent of the issues have been resolved and I’m confident that, in short order, we’ll be able to address the remaining issues.”

Among those expected to testify at Thursday’s meeting are William T “Bill” Fujioka, the County’s Chief Executive Officer; Dr. Hector Flores, Chairman of the White Memorial Hospital Family Practice Department, representing the California Endowment-funded Los Angeles Healthcare Options Task Force; Dr. Keith Norris, Interim President

of Charles Drew University; and Lark Galloway-Gilliam of the Community Health Councils.

Others expected to testify include newly appointed L.A. City Fire Department Chief Millage Peaks, Jr.; Rev. Norman Johnson, representing the Los Angeles Ecumenical Congress; Gary Toebben, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce; Kathy Ochoa, Director of Strategic Initiatives for Service Employees International Union, Local 721; Barbara Segal of Neighborhood Legal Services; and Veronica Melvin, Executive Director of the Alliance for a Better Community.

Under the proposal, negotiated over the past several months, the County and the UC would create a nonprofit entity, with the university providing physician services and medical oversight for the 120-bed hospital, scheduled to open in 2012.

Support for the project has been building for weeks in the County. On Aug. 1, hundreds of stakeholders attended a town hall meeting hosted by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas at a school near the MLK hospital, which was closed to in-patient services in 2007.

On Aug. 18, an overflow audience of 700-plus residents and stakeholders filled the Supervisors' hearing room as the Board, voting on a motion by Ridley-Thomas, unanimously approved a plan to build the new hospital.

The Board also approved a capital program for construction of the new medical facilities -- contingent on the UC Regents voting to enter in the service agreement with the county.

"Momentum continues to grow for the project," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said, adding that it is important that the Regents act in timely matter in order for the County to fully leverage federal stimulus dollars available through the American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

As an example, he cited about \$145 million in stimulus funds for which the County could qualify to build the hospital's Multi-service Ambulatory Care Center. The new

hospital would offer comprehensive services, including an emergency room, surgical beds and ancillary services.

In a recent letter, the Board of Supervisors assured the Regents that under the proposed deal the County would provide all funding for the hospital. The County's financial commitment includes \$63 million in annual operating support, \$50 million in start-up funds, \$28 million for reserve funding, and more than \$200 million to make the inpatient tower at the existing MLK site seismically compliant.

Since taking office last December, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas has made the hospital project his top priority. He envisions that the project will serve as a catalyst for other economic development in the community and provide training for health care professionals.

**WHAT:** University of California Board of Regents information hearing on proposed deal with Los Angeles County to provide physician service for the new Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital.

**WHEN:** Thursday, Sept. 17 at 8:30 a.m.

**LOCATION:** University of California, San Francisco, Mission Bay Community Center, 1675 Owens Street.

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