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Creating a New Hub for Child Safety

Continuing the push to protect children in the child welfare system, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors has approved the development of a comprehensive plan to build a new Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Hub in Willowbrook.

The new MLK Medical Hub's mission will be to have medical and child welfare professionals provide medical and mental health services for children at risk of abuse and neglect. The MLK Hub will be the first of the county's six hubs to receive an expansion so they can provide more intensive services to at risk children, especially those under two years of age.

The plan for the new MLK Hub, which will be located on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Campus, is expected to include funding options, a timeline for relocation and space where behavioral mental health services can be provided on site. The current, 41-year-old location for the MLK Medical Hub is in terrible condition, with warped floorboards, a leaking roof and dysfunctional heating and air cooling systems.

The improvement of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Hub was initiated as part of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection's recommendations.

"We are determined to make child safety a top priority," said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who authored the motion. "We must support and protect the most vulnerable in our society. This hub will create a safety net for these children so they will be kept out of harm's way."

Established in June 2013, the Blue Ribbon Commission was chaired by David Sanders, of the Casey Family Programs foundation, and was made up of 10 child welfare experts appointed by each member of the Board of Supervisors. In June 2014, the commission presented a list of 40 recommendations that would improve child welfare services, including giving more money to relatives who care for children in foster care, providing better medical care for children removed from their homes and improving medical screening of infants who may be at risk.

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