

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 12, 2009

CONTACT: Janice Taylor
323.295.9372 x 221; janice@chc-inc.org

Day of Celebration!

Martin Luther King Hospital to Re-Open in 2012

Los Angeles, CA—Residents and healthcare advocates in South Los Angeles are celebrating the announcement that Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital will re-open with 120 in-patient beds in late 2012. The Hospital has been closed since August 2007, when the County failed the last inspection by federal regulators. Over 4,000 people visited the Hospital's ER every month prior to its closure.

“The re-opening of Martin Luther King Hospital fills a void in a community of over one million residents where there is only one full-scale emergency room and trauma center to serve a 94-square mile area,” says Lark Galloway-Gilliam, executive director of Community Health Councils. After MLK was shuttered, the hospital closest to it saw treatment time from when a patient arrives to when they leave the emergency department increase to more than 12 hours, far longer than the 9 hours for emergency room treatment at LAC-USC.

Under the plan, the hospital would be operated by a new non-profit, with a board selected by the LA County Board of Supervisors and the University of California. The County would contribute financially to the hospital, while UC would provide the physician staff and develop a graduate medical training program. “We are confident the University of California will be a good partner and look forward to contributing to the Hospital's design and implementation.” The plan still has to be approved by the County Board of Supervisors and the UC Board of Regents.

In a survey conducted by CHC at a community forum in July 2007, 82% of respondents gave services at the Hospital an Excellent or Good rating. Virtually all respondents felt it would be in the best interests of the community to make improvements and maintain MLK Hospital as a county facility.

“Not only does the community desperately need the services the Hospital will provide,” continued Galloway-Gilliam, “but the re-opening provides an opportunity to honor the name of Martin Luther King, Jr. and all the sacrifices people have made over the years to establish a center of healthcare excellence in this community. We applaud the efforts of all those who are working to make this happen.”

Community Health Councils is a non-profit, community-based health promotion, advocacy and policy organization. Established in 1992, CHC's mission is to improve health and increase access to quality healthcare for uninsured, economically-disadvantaged, and underserved populations.