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New Medical Center of Louisiana: A Major Step Toward Reality

After years of dreaming, the long sought hopes for a new state-of-the-art full-service health-care facility are going forward. "We are 'on board a fast moving train!' " exclaimed **Dwayne Thomas ('84)**, CEO of the Medical Center of Louisiana, as he and a leadership corps representing the LSU Board of Supervisors, the Louisiana Legislature, the LSU Health Sciences Center, and the LSU and Tulane schools of medicine met to present an exciting action plan that will move toward actual construction, which consultants on the project visualize to be well underway toward completion in 2008.

The first giant step toward turning dream into reality was taken in July, when Louisiana State Senator Diana Bajoie, along with State Representative Karen Carter, both longtime supporters of the Charity Hospital System, announced that they had secured \$1.8 million dollars in the Capital Budget to fund the creation of the Master Plan for the project.

Consultants working with Dr. Thomas estimate that the entire program will cost upwards of \$350 million dollars and will create for Greater New Orleans an entirely new comprehensive health-care facility that will, in effect, replace Charity Hospital as we know it today and turn University Hospital into a totally modern outpatient center and graduate medical education facility.

At a kickoff luncheon in the University Hospital Auditorium, Walter R. Adams, President/CEO of Adams Project Management, revealed that he and his associates had recently completed a full assessment of both the Charity and University campuses and have recommended to LSUHSC Chancellor **John Rock ('72)**, LSUHSC leaders, and Dr. Thomas the replacement or relocation of the Charity campus and a full renovation of the University campus for an alternate use.

Adams remarked that Charity Hospital has significant facility issues, including life safety, water infiltration, and severe exterior deterioration. The Adams group's recommendation was that a new replacement 600-bed health-care center become the centerpiece of a bold, new Medical Center of Louisiana.

Dr. Rock applauded the efforts of the Medical Center of Louisiana, New Orleans. "Our great Charity Hospital is slowly but surely aging," he told the kickoff audience. "We must move forward! The Medical Center of Louisiana is critical to graduate medical education in our state, for both LSU and Tulane."

Dr. Thomas expressed his deep gratitude to Senator Bajoie at the gathering for her unfailing support of the Medical Center of Louisiana, New Orleans and for always being a legislative leader who cares deeply for her constituents. "We have always known the Senator to be a champion of Charity," Dr. Thomas added.