



## **LSU HCSD Statement on Charity Hospital**

### **For Immediate Release**

**Baton Rouge, LA (June 08, 2006)** – As we all know, Charity Hospital was irrevocably damaged during Hurricane Katrina and has been inoperable since directly after the storm.

In the wake of the floods, LSU engaged a highly qualified and independent out-of-state firm, the Adams Project Management Group, to conduct an impartial assessment of our damaged facilities. After an exhaustive review of the systems and environmental conditions at Charity Hospital, the consultants deemed the building unsalvageable and an inappropriate environment for health care.

A second assessment by U.S. Government Accountability Office reached the same conclusion, that Charity Hospital was so badly damaged – and in such poor condition before the storm – that spending money for repairs ‘may be wasting tens of millions of dollars’

We appreciate the help and concern from others who are well-intended and motivated by a shared concern for patients and education. But our fiduciary duty to our patients, medical staff and the community requires us to make decisions based on written assessments by qualified engineering experts.

While parts of Charity Hospital may look normal to the naked eye, just as a cancer patient may appear to a lay person, the damage is indeed extensive behind walls that obscure, for example, dangerous mold and asbestos. We must be concerned about what hides above the ceiling tiles, in the HVAC chases, throughout the corroded gas lines, and in the 1938 electrical systems that run through 21 stories of the building. And, just as a flooded car cannot be put in working order by detailing, the repair of Charity Hospital extends well beyond pumping the basement and mopping floors.

Despite these challenges, we see a bright future. LSU is working with the US Department of Veterans Affairs with an eye towards building a new, university-style medical center, and a series of community clinics to better serve all residents of New Orleans. Our temporary health center at 1450 Poydras Street is seeing upwards of 300 patients a day. In April, LSU re-established trauma services at Elmwood. And renovations are well underway at University Hospital, which will open this fall initially as a 156 bed facility, and 200 beds by years end, that includes trauma.

The doctors and staff at LSU Health Care Services Division wholeheartedly agree with those participating in the rally - providing health care to the residents of the Crescent City must be our top priority. We have no stronger concern than returning health care services to the community and bringing home the programs of the LSU and Tulane medical schools, which our hospitals in New Orleans historically have supported.

The mission of Charity Hospital is not about a building, but rather it's about providing the best health care possible to the people of New Orleans.

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