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**TESTIMONY OF THOMAS WILLIAMS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, good afternoon. I am Tom Williams, Executive Director of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Research Foundation. The Research Foundation is a 501 3(c) non-profit corporation that was formed just over a year ago under the auspices of the UNLV Foundation. The Research Foundation is dedicated to supporting, promoting, and reporting on research activities at the University. On behalf of the University, and in support of its mission, our organization is positioned to take advantage of opportunities for the expansion of basic and applied research, technology development and commercialization as well as intellectual property development and advancement. Constructing and developing the Harry Reid UNLV Research and Technology Park in southwest Las Vegas will also be a responsibility of the Research Foundation.

We at the University feel that the encouragement and growth of research and technology activities throughout the State of Nevada, particularly in collaboration with a large research intensive institution such as UNLV, will have the effect of establishing a higher quality of life for all. Increasing opportunities for high tech development and the nature and societal demands of professionals that must be employed in these and related types of activities has the indirect effect of creating a requirement for world class K through 12 educational systems, cultural amenities and, medical specialists and facilities. Another direct effect, for those of us who watch our college educated adult children accept employment opportunities in other areas of the country, will be to provide science and engineering related positions for University and Community System of Nevada graduates to fill, locally, not in far off states.

The opportunity presented to UNLV and Southern Nevada by the creation of a small Specialty Hospital, such as the proposed Spine and Pain Hospital in Las Vegas, would be the potential of attracting to our area, new, world-renowned physicians and scientists in the research and treatment of spine and neural disorders.

Presently, there is no facility such as this located in the Mountain West, therefore, this will be a truly unique venture, ultimately working toward the development of a "center of excellence." Neurosurgery is a complex science of the brain and spine

and is not yet perfected. The rapid advances in diagnostic evaluation of spine and spinal cord disorders have provided new insight into the underlying physiology that has enhanced the surgical and nonsurgical treatment of spinal disorders. Many new developments in spinal surgical techniques with microsurgery, instrumentation and minimally invasive procedures have improved the outcome of complex spinal disorders. Through additional research and study this complex medical endeavor will likely result in several major breakthroughs.

We have been told that this Specialty Hospital would be of limited size and scope and would primarily focus on non-life threatening diseases of the spine, related musculoskeletal disorders, pain management and rehabilitation. For the maximum effectiveness and exposure, the Specialty Hospital would work closely with the UNLV and our many academic colleges.

A world class anatomy and teaching facility envisioned as an entity within the Specialty Hospital would afford optimal growth and learning for undergraduate and graduate students alike.

Currently, the University offers several areas of medical study that can directly benefit as a result of a working relationship with the Specialty Hospital. Students and faculty involved in Psychology, Biotechnology, Health Sciences, Forensics and other related areas would also be able to benefit through cooperative and complementary research. Possible areas of study could include, but would not be limited to: tele-medicine, physical therapy, laboratory, and biotechnology research. With a broadened spectrum of study, the opportunity to obtain grant funding for each organization or project would greatly increase.

An interactive relationship of this magnitude will provide for advanced research and enhanced training facilities yielding more rapid and continuous improvement in medical technology. For example, the UNLV National Supercomputer Center for Energy and the Environment is available for intensive research and "e-health" outreach applications. In today's increasingly automated and computerized world, such a technology is on the forefront of development and would be a great convenience to the general public.

By providing students advanced training it would grant them the upper hand in securing higher-level positions in their field of interest. Internships, assistantships, and fellowships may also be made available through the Specialty Hospital. Further, it would provide cutting edge jobs for graduates who may otherwise have

to leave the state to find similar employment opportunities. As more students graduate it will enhance credibility of the facility as well as attract other sought after medical professionals to the State. The Las Vegas area could act as a magnet for biomedical health care enterprises that will facilitate the diversification of Nevada's economy.

The UNLV Research Foundation could act as a vehicle for future industry progress through collaborative research projects, potentially implemented at our research park. The research park could also be an ideal site for a facility of this sort.

In conclusion, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Research Foundation was established to promote collaborative research opportunities between UNLV and public and private entities involved in advancing science and technology. The proposal to develop a Spine and Pain, Specialty Hospital in Southern Nevada and the attendant research prospects that become available to UNLV Researchers and students could present a significant amount of support to the University's mission and to the economic diversification of our region. With the State of Nevada recently ranked in a Milken Institute Research Report in the bottom tier of the fifty states in Health Care and related research economic impact, we believe that activities advancing and increasing Scientific Research and Technology could prove to be of great benefit.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to respond to any questions.