

1 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Dr. Jerry Gentry.

2 DR. GENTRY: Good evening, Madam Chairperson and
3 commission members. My name is Dr. Jerry Gentry and I serve as
4 the medical director for the Methodist Medical Complex in
5 Robinsonville, Mississippi, located in the northern part of our
6 state.

7 I'd like to share with you some insights in regards
8 to the effect of gaming on the health care delivery system in
9 Tunica County.

10 I can tell you from a personal standpoint that the
11 effect has indeed been immeasurable. As a native of Tunica
12 County, I can remember that if you got ill or suffered some sort
13 of trauma either late in the evening or late at night, you either
14 had to drive all the way up to Memphis, Tennessee, which is about
15 35 miles to the north of Tunica County, or 35 miles south of
16 Tunica County to Clarksdale, Mississippi.

17 And for either one of those trips, you'd have to fill
18 up the gas tank in your car because the gas stations were few and
19 far between in either direction.

20 But now, all this changed with the opening of Tunica
21 County's first 24-hour urgent care walk-in medical facility, of
22 which I have the privilege of directing. In the past two years
23 since I've returned home to Mississippi and Tunica County, we've
24 seen an enormous growth in our patient load.

25 To give you somewhat of an idea, from the year-to-
26 date figures from 1997 to 1998, the difference is approximately
27 from 2,000 to 3,800 patients seen at my clinic. That's a growth
28 of over 82 percent. And of these numbers, about one-half are
29 either from casino employees or patrons.

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1 Additionally, a county ambulance system operates out
2 of our clinic and approximately one-half of those patients that
3 they transport to outlying medical facilities also come from the
4 casinos. But the clinic also serves the Tunica County residents
5 as well.

6 Approximately 24 percent of our patients are in the
7 pediatric age groups, and additionally, we see a significant
8 amount of acute trauma cases, workmen's compensation patients, as
9 well as chronic care type patients such as diabetics,
10 hypertensives and the like.

11 I'm not attributing out sole existence to the
12 presence of gaming in Tunica County but I am here to attest to
13 the fact that it has had and continues to have a profound effect
14 on the way the health care is being delivered.

15 And I think the key to delivering health care in
16 today's society is accessibility, which in our particular area
17 would not be available were it not for the patronage we receive
18 from the gaming industry. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you, Dr. Gentry. Chuck
20 Patton? Is Mr. Patton here? That's the end of our list for
21 public comment period.

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