Steve McKernan – Good evening everyone. Thank you for attending tonight. I’m Steve McKernan, the Administrator of UNMH. With me are Jamie Silva-Steele and Misty Salaz. We have all the information related to these town hall meetings on our website at www.hospitals.unm.edu. We are recording this meeting tonight as well.

Given the concerns of the community expressed in these meetings, UNMH has decided not to put the clinic at this site at San Mateo and Central. There are some folks who have expressed interest in the project. Jamie will provide you with her contact info. We have a working committee and we would love to have people help us move forward with the program or be involved in other areas at UNMH through patient advisory committees at our clinics. I’d be happy to answer questions.

**Joanne Landry** --- Does that mean you are going to find another location in the international district?

**Steve McKernan** -- Right now we are not going to that specific location. Given that this group is fairly representative of the neighborhood associations, our impression is that we wouldn’t find another location that is suitable unless someone wants to stand up and say you will find another location.

**Joanne Landry** -- I am the president of Trumbull Village and our association is very interested in you finding another location in the International District. We do work with those addicts, families and children. There aren’t as many services available as needed. It was my understanding that the specific location was the concern. I don’t believe that our association is saying we don’t want you here. We see the need. I live on Trumbull and Mesilla and I deal with gang members and these hurting folks, parents and children, children taken from parents and in state custody. I deal with this and have been for the last 15 years. When we live in a secure, isolated community with great houses we understand that. You don’t want to see them in the public urinating and there is a fear they might be burglarizing their homes. But there is another part where hundreds of people need these services. What you have to offer in the area of opiate use and having doctors on site dealing with alcoholism, these needs are a tremendous help in our community. I talked last time about collaboration. I would be delighted to see if you could still find another location that everyone would feel less threatened but could provide these services.

**Steve McKernan** -- We have been searching for property for over two years. As we stated, we are not technically bound by city zoning ordinances. As it relates to this project, we fully intend to abide by these ordinances. Looking at the map, R1 properties represent residential areas. We cannot locate near them. There are a limited number of properties where we could go. Secondly, the property actually has to be for sale and we have to be able to acquire it at a reasonable price. After putting a contract out on the property, we come back to the neighborhood associations to consult with them. We will look at that but as we’ve talked about in previous meetings, we have to move in
relatively short order and we are going to be forced to move quickly. Our current landlord has indicated we will have to move at the end of our lease. He may be able to extend it a month or two. We will have to move. We appreciate your comments and please let Jamie know so we can get you on a list of advisory folks. We concur there is a gigantic needs for these services. We don’t want to seem like we are abandoning the community, we really want to help the community – all of Albuquerque. There is no part of Albuquerque that isn’t affected by opiate addictions, we know that. Again, we’re also looking for a place where public transportation is available. Of our patient population a large number of them rely on public transportation seven days a week. At this time we don’t think it’s best to go to the location at Central and San Mateo.

**Charlie Bennett** -- La Mesa. Where you are located presently and considering the empty lot next to you, would that suffice to service the population?

Steve -- We are going to look at that. That is a property this is under consideration. Fundamentally the big issue is that we don’t believe that property is the best location because of the lack of good public transportation. We are trying to engage with the city to see if this is possible. That is a street that there is nothing else on that requires public transportation and isn’t a destination for anything else. If we are going to invest money in a property, we have to know that the city will support it for a long period of time.

**Pete Dinelli** -- I think you made the right decision. I think you earned respect of people here. I strongly encourage you to get a hold of the head of the Family & Community Services for the City of Albuquerque. I know the city has some properties that are available. I don’t know if they are for sale, but I do think working with Family and Community Services and the Transit Department to see if they can help you find locations, I believe you find some that will be far more beneficial than the San Mateo and Central location. I do want to thank you for listening to this community.

**Enrique Cardiel** -- I understand that the majority of people here applaud this decision. I agree with Joann--there is a great deal of need here. New Mexico has one of the highest rates of opiate deaths in the country. I’ve worked with Pete on some problem properties in our neighborhood but really I think the need is here. Trying to find the right balance is important. As a community member, I am willing to work with you on figuring out how to serve the needs of the people of this community, the South Valley and everywhere else.

Steve -- thank you I appreciate that.

**Marsha McMurray-Avila** -- I live off a block off San Mateo, south of Katherine. I am very happy to see some of my neighbors here. It sounds like you’ve made a decision here, but contrary to what some of the people say here I wanted to present a different take on it. Over the past 26 years I’ve passed through the intersection of Central and San Mateo daily. I see the faces of those who are hurting and need help. I want to speak to those of us here who may be afraid of those folks and that are afraid this program might attract more people you might consider undesirable. I think it’s a very human reaction to be afraid when the media only focuses on the small number of horror
stories and very little on the large numbers success stories. I had a story I wanted to share with you. Back in the early 1990’s I helped established a recovery house in the North Valley for homeless addicts and alcoholics. There were many people who were worried about “these people” being in the area would do to their sense of safety and their property values. After the program began, they soon found, as I think we might find in this case, that this program made the best possible neighbor. The men in the house helped clean up the alley, they held barbeques for the neighbors and they worked hard on their recovery. Those neighbors found it was much more preferable to have people seeking help and who’ve made a commitment to getting better than to have neighbors who are actively using drugs and alcohol. It’s much better to have a program with guidelines, security and accountability to the community based on the fact that they are visible representatives of a well-known organization in the community whose reputation depends on a well-run program than it is to have people wandering the streets without access to treatment. Speaking to those that say this was a bad process, I understand this process wasn’t perfect and now there are plans to look for another location, but I’ve learned that not all opportunities present themselves in ideal ways. I still think this could’ve been an opportunity for us to do something to improve the conditions we are complaining about in this area. I see this as an opportunity for many reasons. Most obvious it is part of the solution to address the problem of addiction in our county. We all recognize that addiction is an epidemic in our society today. It isn’t an epidemic that will be solved by arresting them and throwing them in jail. It will only be solved by recognizing it is a chronic disease and a problem that needs and deserves quality, accessible treatment. I also saw this as an opportunity to gain a partner with a great deal of influence, who could have a stake in working with us to improve the physical environment all around Central and San Mateo as well as improving the broader social service environment through coordination of the various programs in the area that we desperately need. By enlisting the support of UNMH, as a good neighbor, we could leverage the resources needed to make this a truly healthy and safe urban area for residents, for local businesses and for patients in the program. Several people have pointed out that this is a very unsafe intersection for pedestrians or people getting on or off buses. I was part of a group this past year that looked at the safety record for this area on Central which is not good. We recommended numerous ways the area could be improved physically through sidewalk upgrades, improved lighting, expanded bus stops, and ways to calm traffic to help reduce accidents. We also looked at studies that showed the more activity on the street; shopping, eating out, seeking healthcare, the less likely there will be criminal activities. Redeveloping vacant lots into public spaces could actually help decrease the possibility of criminal activity based on studies and experience of other cities. The location of this program here could have been an impetus to do some of the positive improvements to the physical and social environment that we’ve been recommending. Whether you live in a two story house in the far NE Heights or a two story apartment building in the International District, whether you are a 5th generation resident of the North or South Valley or a one month resident of the downtown area, we are all neighbors. For the sake of our neighbors across the whole county who need help and for our neighbors right here who deserve more resources of all kinds from health services to healthy streets, I only ask that we find a way to work together. It’s time to push aside our fears instead of pushing aside our most vulnerable
neighbors to the margins of society, to reach out our hands and pull them back into the circle of community. We’ve seen recently, quite visibly, how communities on the other side of the country can pull together in the face of natural disasters. Let’s not wait for the next disaster, another overdose of a young person or another person hit and killed by a car while crossing the street. Let’s pull together now and do something good for our youth, community and neighbors. We are only as healthy as our least healthy neighbors.

Dave Staehlin -- I appreciate the concern and I appreciate what you say about this. I live in a world of reality because I live right on top of that intersection in my business. My biggest problem is adding onto what is already there. We need to move what is there out. I grew up at Bridge and Five Points. 60 years ago it was the center of drug traffic in the state. I saw drug deals when I was 10 to 12 years old. I had left my shop and was turning on Central when the methadone center was one block off San Mateo and Central. I pulled into a lot to take a call on my phone and I looked over at the parking lot of the methadone center. There were 12 or 14 cars, 5 or 6 of them had the back doors open. They were dealing drugs in those cars. I wondered, this is a methadone center, how can they be doing that. Well, they are in the center of drug dealing at San Mateo and Central anyhow. I talked to a fellow who had been through treatment and who rented a storage unit from me. His story was that they have a certain group, they come in for their methadone, and they are dealers. They are cleaning themselves up but they’re dealing coke and heroin out of the back seat of their cars to others. It’s layers, layers and layers. We have a layer problem there now. The reality is when you said not to be afraid, these people need help, we just lost a grandson on heroin overdose so we know this but we know if you bring more of them into the area you aren’t helping the patients you are bringing in. You are putting them in the area of temptation that needs to be cleaned up first. I don’t understand why you don’t have it at UNMH. You are close to the Big-I, you have wonderful public transportation, you have medical facility there, I don’t understand. You said they told you to take it out to the community to have satellites, is that what you said?

Steve McKernan -- Most of the feedback we get from our patients says they want us to get our services off Lomas and get them in sites that are more convenient for people in the community to access.

Dave Staehlin -- That to me is a very useable are for what you’re doing. I’m wondering if they don’t want to come into the area because that will put too many of the type of people we’re fighting everyday into that area?

Steve McKernan -- What I could convey to you is at UNMH is an ER that takes care of almost a 100,000 patients per year. We already have a focus point at UNMH. If a clinic is best suited next to the hospital, then we will locate it there. We have capability to deal with a lot of folks who have diverse types of issues. We aren’t worried or scared about bring them to UNMH. We looked at the maps, saw where the highest proportion of people who access our service live, triangulated it with public transportation and some other factors. Along with the availability of land, a willing seller and meeting the city’s zoning ordinances we came to this property. We thought there was good logic and before we actually purchased the property, we wanted to come to the community to get feedback. We understand the feedback and have responded to it and the University
has made the decision not to locate the clinic at San Mateo and Central. We also are hearing the sentiment in the room that the need for these services is extraordinarily high. We will go back and try and locate a property that we can locate this clinic in, hopefully, on good public transportation but not receive resistance from the community. I wish you luck. We've been totally involved in that type of situation. Any place you go, you are going to have pushback. I'm looking at the patients you are bringing in and the welfare of the people around them that live in the area too. You made the right decision.

**Question** -- Does that mean you aren't purchasing that property period?

**Steve McKernan** -- It wouldn't appear we are going to buy that property.

**Question** -- You said you don’t need to go by the city zoning laws but you are going to--the county has a lot of property that is near Downtown Albuquerque, 4th and Central -- does the same hold true for the county zoning too?

**Steve McKernan** -- UNM is constitutionally in the State of New Mexico effectively almost like a municipality. When it owns property, it has to abide by its own zoning ordinance, not necessarily the neighboring municipality ordinances. The University has said, as it relates to these clinics, we want to abide by these ordinances to be a good neighbor.

**Charlie Bennett**, La Mesa -- With the planning group, may we ask that you can put some people on that planning committee that don’t stand to gain financially in any way from the placement of your facility, 501c3’s, etc.?

**Steve McKernan** -- Jamie asks people to declare their conflicts so everyone in the room knows if there is a conflict.

**Carolyn Gonzales** – I live on Madeira SE. I’d like to thank you for the decision you’ve reached. What we’ve said from the beginning is we recognize the strong need for these kinds of services in this community, but because there are already a number of services available in the SE Heights, which has, I think, increased the number of people requesting these services, these facilities need to be spread across the city. It would be important I think to create a health facility for adolescents and perhaps locate it near some of the more affluent high schools because there is a blind eye being turned by many parents about the problems that exist in the public schools in those areas. We certainly don’t want to expose those adolescents to the hard core people located at San Mateo and Central. One of the things we need to deal with as a community is that we have such a prevalence of apartments and that does lead to some other problems. Maybe we need to work with our city officials to provide some other services to make it and area that is attracting the right types of businesses into the area. As I’ve said before, this is Route 66 and every planner will tell you, this is supposed to be prime retail space, not service industry motivated. I really do appreciate all your time and efforts bringing the meetings together.

**Micaela Cadena** – I work at a 501c3, doing policy and campaign work. I’ve been quite honored to work with NM women and families who are struggling and who live everyday
fighting addiction. Addicted people don’t choose to be addicted. Addicted people don’t choose to poor or to struggle. As many have said, it is a disease. I serve on a statewide task force, one that came out of House Memorial 14 in 2011 and together with an incredible team of doctors from UNMH and legal professionals across the state; we are working to improve the access to prenatal care and treatment. In that work I’ve been able to do focus groups and workshops with women who’ve experienced both pregnancy and substance abuse. What I heard in these stories is heartbreaking. A woman shared that she had to go through 9 felonies before she had access to treatment. Treatment options around the state vary, but many of the centers have waiting lists and may are court mandated, so a person can’t get in until they’ve committed a crime -- the system is backward. Over the years I was also quite honored to organize with families of some of the women who were murdered and found on the West Mesa. Two or three of them were on waiting lists for treatment so they could create a different path for their lives. We know these realities and what is really problematic to me, is that it seems like the only residents that count are those who own property or are vested in businesses. As echoed by many here, these people with high needs or are looking for resources for treatment or healthcare live in this neighborhood. So when you talk about planning committees or having community involved, what that means is a certain class of community. I am quite disappointed in this decision, but as we look forward, I like to know that all the community will be represented, that those most impacted by this issue, those needing treatment get to be here as well to tell their stories about what it means to have real access to healthcare. If we frame this as an issue of healthcare, can you imagine your sentiment if to get to the healthcare you needed you had no reliable vehicle, you had certain clinic hours to rely on, and you had to manage your way across town amidst trying to raise kids, hold down a job and get your life in order. Would that be human rights, would that be healthcare. We have to treat all people in Albuquerque with equal rights and recognition. It doesn’t matter if we own property or are homeless; we are citizens of Albuquerque. I ask that as we move this process forward we continue to respect all voices and especially those that are impacted by this issue equally. I understand you all are impacted; I live in the South Valley. My office is on the corner of Copper and Morningside. We’ve invested in this community; we’re staying in this community. There isn’t a single day I’ve felt threatened harassed, intimidated or had any damage to our property in the five years we’ve been here. We treat people with respect and kindness. I ask going forward we be very critical in our decision and that when we talk about community, we’re not talking about one kind of community.

Jennifer Jones -- I am a resident in the Trumbull community where I grew up. I’ve seen a lot of transformations over the years and what Mr. Denali speaks of. My fear is that a lot of people cannot relate to a lot of the social ills we are exposed to because they aren’t a resident in that community. I have to respectfully disagree with Ms. Gonzales’ logic of locating clinics in more affluent areas because families in those communities can afford treatment where families in this community cannot. Once upon a time, there were not treatment facilities for adolescents or those that are lower income from what I understand. If there is continued blockage toward progress, we are going to head back in the direction where we were before the barriers went up to rid the
neighborhood of gangs and drugs. This is a very realistic fear for many people in this area. I had that experience; my brother was stabbed five times in front of my house before they rid the neighborhood. As a former drug addict, there were not options available for me at that time. As an adolescent, I wouldn't know where to locate those services. Had I not had the support of my parents, also former drug addicts, I would not be in the position I am now. My concern is that people have this idea that it’s ok for our youth to be exposed to these realistic, terroristic fears over here, but it’s not ok for other neighborhoods across the city.

Diana Fraiser -- Coal and Carlisle Block Captain. I just bought a house two years ago. I’ve lived in Albuquerque for 30 years. I am happy you made this decision. My first apartment was at Dallas and Copper which was not an ideal place to raise two children in. I had an apartment on Palomas, one block south of Zuni. On almost a daily basis I had to call the police because there were crack deals going on outside my children’s bedrooms. That was in 1989 and 1990, nothing has changed. As long as we continue to allow as a community, this type of behavior to breed in this area, the problem is going to continue in this area. The City of Albuquerque crime statistic maps show Central Avenue has the highest crime rate of any kind across the city. As a 23 year sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have been exposed and dealt with a lot of people in recovery for drug and alcohol addiction. From my own experience, the people who want to recover will go anywhere and go to any lengths to do it. As a single parent on welfare, struggling to make ends meet, continuing to centralize housing for low income people in this area is a big issue. If you continue to feed the monster, the monster will continue to grow.

Steve McKernan -- We are here as UNM to take feedback from the community. We understand this is a very sensitive issue. We will take comments as long as they are directed toward UNM and not toward each other. We’ll take a few more comments. There are people here to want to help address this issue. We have our folks meeting on how to develop the program in the community and we have many ways you can be involved. Jamie will get your contact information.

Marian Jordan – President of Elder Homes Neighborhood Association -- I do want to commend you for what you are trying to do and I just think that this is not the place to do it. I was here 25 years ago, retired from Sandia Labs. At the time the place was totally different, we didn’t have the problem we have now. I don’t know how to solve this problem, but this is not the place to put the clinic. I had elderly people call me, they are afraid to go to Walmart or Walgreens.

Denicia Cadena -- I have worked for a long time in the International District. I too am very disappointed in the decision not to locate the clinic in the International District. I think it’s about our collective responsibility. I’ve heard many comments about wanting to address these issues, about how it’s an issue in our community, but always saying it needs to be somewhere else. There is not going to be a solution for the diseases that are hurting these families and communities unless someone takes responsibility for them. We believe in organizing and equality for our women and youth, but when it comes to our neighborhoods, that’s not true. There are so many issues – race, class,
culture. I am really disappointed that we aren't taking collective action to bring this resource to our community that people need.

Steve McKernan -- We’d like to thank you for taking the time to attend these and please sign up here if you’d like to become involved. Jamie, Misty and I are here to listen.

Representative Sheryl Stapleton -- I’d like to say I’ve been at all three meeting. Thank you to UNM for listening to our community in regards to our concerns. I believe you understand, they are concerned, they see the need for the resources to go to the individuals who need it. I appreciate that you have the patience to stand there and listen to our comments.

Representative Gail Chasey -- I’ve been taking notes during this. Everyone recognizes what a terrible cost it is to society when we don’t have treatment programs. The thought of these people wandering aimlessly in the neighborhood you targeted is absolutely true. It’s a terrible cost to us; we end up putting people in prison. That costs a lot more money; we can’t spend it on the schools, on prevention programs and early childhood programs or public health program. We really have to work together and I really do appreciate the University’s efforts.