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FEATURED

## West Cecil acquires UMD Dental School

By Jane Bellmyer [jbellemyer@cecilwhig.com](mailto:jbellemyer@cecilwhig.com) 21 hrs ago



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West Cecil Health Center will be the official owner and operator of the dental clinic in Principio Health Center on Route 40 in Perryville starting July 1. Students from the University of Maryland School of Dentistry will continue to train there, but the clinic will now serve patients of all ages.

PERRYVILLE — The University of Maryland Dental School is undergoing some important changes, which will mean better overall health care for everyone in Cecil County, according to John Ness, the interim director of West Cecil Health Center.

"We'll be wide open to the public, accepting most insurance plans and Medicaid," he added.

Effective July 1, West Cecil Health Center will be the official owner and operator of the dental clinic in the Principio Health Center on U.S. Route 40.

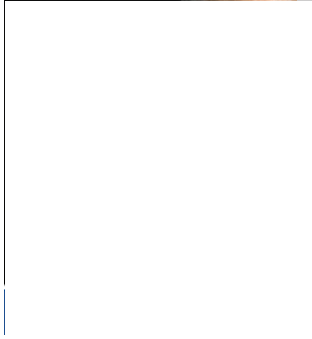
Mark Luckner, executive director of the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission, said West Cecil's acquisition was high on the commission's list of projects for the current grant funding year.

"This was one of the superior dental projects," Luckner said. "When West Cecil came to us looking to partner with University of Maryland Dental School, we jumped at the opportunity."

CHRC awarded a grant of \$325,000 to the Conowingo-based nonprofit medical center to aid in the acquisition.

West Cecil Health Center also operates a facility in Havre de Grace and Ness said negotiations continue for a third site in the Elkton area. The Conowingo facility opened in January 2008 in direct response to the 2000 U.S. Census, which identified the area as medically underserved. Opening first in a set of modular buildings on Rowlandsville Road, West Cecil moved to its current facility on Rock Springs Road in August 2013.

When the dental school opened in 2009 it was expressly for pediatric patients, although it offered cleaning and emergency dental care for adults. Under the West Cecil Health Care umbrella, all ages will now be welcome to receive care. Students from University of Maryland School of Dentistry will also continue to train at the facility on Route 40 in Perryville.



"We'll have practicing dentists along with the students," Ness said, adding dental hygiene students will also train there.

Staffing is being increased in anticipation of the increase in patients.

"We'll grow as needed," Ness said, noting that the addition of oral surgeons and orthodontists is also on the list.