



STATE OF MARYLAND

# DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS APPROVES OCCUPANCY LEASE FOR NEW PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY**

**Annapolis (August 10, 2011)** -- Governor Martin O'Malley today announced Board of Public Works approval of an occupancy lease between the State of Maryland, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO). The occupancy lease will be used by MEDCO to facilitate the sale of MEDCO tax-exempt bonds for the purpose of constructing and equipping the new State of Maryland Public Health Laboratory (PHL) in East Baltimore.

"Maryland's Public Health Laboratory will protect our community from a wide array of threats," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "This state-of-the-art facility will also assure that Maryland will continue to be a leader in public health and technology."

The state-of-the-art laboratory has cutting-edge technologies and the flexibility to incorporate future technologies to meet the changing needs and laboratory science of the future. This new facility will enable lab scientists to efficiently and rapidly identify disease outbreaks and respond to acts of chemical and bio-terrorism.

"Locating this laboratory near the Johns Hopkins medical campus will support the missions of both institutions," said DHMH Secretary Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. "We will have a platform to collaborate and innovate to protect the public health."

The building will be located in the Science + Technology Park at Johns Hopkins at the corner of Ashland and Rutland Streets in East Baltimore. The construction of the five-story, 234,000 gross square foot, LEED Silver building is expected to begin this fall

The facility will meet bio-safety level 2 and bio-safety level 3 laboratory requirements and will consist of open-bay laboratories, laboratory support areas and administration. Six scientific laboratory divisions will occupy the building including Newborn Screening, Environmental Chemistry, Molecular Biology, Virology-Immunology, Environmental Microbiology and Public Health (Clinical) Microbiology.

The PHL is responsible for providing laboratory testing, consulting and regulatory support of infectious diseases, epidemiology environmental and regulatory public health programs.

The PHL provides protection to the public's health through surveillance and tracking of diseases, toxic contamination of food, water and environmental hazards in water, soil, and air. The new facility will enhance participation in the national Laboratory Response Network, which includes the Emergency Food Response Network, the Biological Defense System and BioWatch program and the Radiation Network.

The Laboratories Administration currently employs 236 permanent and contractual in employees and performed approximately 10.5 million tests in Fiscal Year 2011.

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