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SENATOR CARDIN PRESENTS WEST CECIL HEALTH CENTER WITH CHECK FOR \$119,904

Funding Is Part of Economic Recovery Funding

CONOWINGO, MD -- **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), today visited the West Cecil Health Center to present the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) with a ceremonial check for \$119,904. The funding was included in the recently enacted ***American Reinvestment and Recovery Act***, which included a \$2 billion boost for community health centers.

The West Cecil Health Center opened in January 2008 and is a family practice that serves approximately 1,975 patients in a 40-mile radius. The center plans to use the economic recovery funds to increase its medical staff so it can expand patient care.

The West Cecil Health Center is one of 16 established FQHCs in Maryland receiving \$4,253,584 in grants from the stimulus package to enhance existing services to meet expanding need. The stimulus package also included \$155 million to establish 126 new health centers across the country. These additional centers will be able to provide access to health center care for 750,000 people in 30 states and two territories.

“Expanding our system of community health care centers – centers that we know work and save lives – is an investment in the health of our citizens and our economy,” said Senator Cardin. “We saw with the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from an abscessed tooth what the lack of health care can mean. I am committed to ensuring that all Americans have access to health care.”

FQHCs are primary care providers, open to everyone. The centers provide 18 million Americans nationwide with basic health services such as prenatal care, childhood immunizations and cancer screenings for patients covered by Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance, as well as those who have no insurance.

In February, Senator Cardin co-sponsored the ***Access for All Americans Act***, which would authorize \$8.3 billion to expand the number of FQHC from 1,100 to 4,800 in five years. The legislation also would strengthen the National Health Service Corps by authorizing \$1.2 billion. The substantial increase in funding would address a serious doctor, dentist and nursing shortage in the United States by expanding the effort to recruit and train health care professionals. The corps provides debt forgiveness and grants for medical and dental students in exchange for practicing in underserved areas.