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AHOSKIE — A new way of teaching dentistry and delivering dental care is coming to eastern North Carolina with the opening of the first ECU School of Dental Medicine Community Service Learning Center.

East Carolina University and local officials cut the ribbon on the $3 million, 8,000 square-foot center on Thursday. ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said the center fulfills the commitment the university and dental school made to provide care in underserved areas.

“Not every university puts service first,” Ballard said to a crowd of more than 100 gathered for the event. “I think for 105 years, ECU has put service first.”

ECU dental faculty members, dental residents and students will provide care for area residents at the learning center. Meanwhile, students and residents will learn what practicing in a community setting is like.

The center has 16 dental chairs and will employ local staff members, including a business manager, five to six dental assistants, two to three dental hygienists and two general dentistry residents. Four to five students will be at the center for nine-week rotations.

Patients may receive a variety of services, including general, preventive and emergency dental care as well as crowns, root canals and bridges.

The center will begin seeing patients in early July. It is built next to the Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center, which provides primary care to low-income adults and children and is expected to open later this year.

Ahoskie, a town of 5,000 near the Chowan and Meherrin rivers in northeastern North Carolina, was one of the first sites named for what eventually will be 10 such centers across the state. The other sites identified are Elizabeth City, Lillington in central North Carolina, Davidson County in the Triad, and Sylva and Spruce Pine in the western part of the state.

Ahoskie and surrounding counties have fewer than 10 dentists.
Overall, North Carolina ranks 47th out of the 50 states in the number of dentists per capita, according to the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Many people without good dental care live in rural areas, where North Carolina averages three dentists for every 10,000 people.

In urban areas of the state, the ratio is nearly five dentists for every 10,000 people.

Three counties, all in the northeast — Tyrrell, Hyde and Camden — have no dentists.

Nationally, the ratio is six dentists for every 10,000 people.

Kim Schwartz, Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center chief executive, said the need for dental care is great among the area’s low-income people.

“They either pull their own teeth out (and) don’t recognize the early dental needs for their children,” she said. “It’s a perpetual cycle.”

Schwartz and leaders of the Roanoke-Chowan Foundation also announced a grant of $83,125 to help pay for dental care for the health center’s sliding-fee-scale patients at the ECU center.

Officials also hope the center will help attract new dentists to a community where most dentists are at or near retirement age.

Dr. Terry Hall said he came back to his hometown of Ahoskie more than two decades ago to practice dentistry.

“I’m back to being the youngest dentist in the county after 26 years,” he said.

For more information about the community service learning center or to inquire about dental services there, call 332-1904.
Officials at Vidant Health Systems and the Brody School of Medicine said the institutions and patients they serve are in a good position after Thursday’s U.S Supreme Court decision on the Affordable Care Act. The court’s decision to uphold the constitutionality of the act means the quality care and services eastern North Carolina patients receive will not change, Vidant’s new chief executive officer, Dr. David Herman, said at a Thursday afternoon news conference.

“In health care, a lot of things change every day, but if you’re the person that comes in after the Super Bowl and has to make everything in the stadium the way it was before the game was played, it really doesn’t matter who won or lost on the field,” Herman said. “That’s really what it means for health care as well.”

Herman said Vidant has to deal with continual changes in insurance, Medicare regulations and state funding every day.

“We’re in a constant state of adaptation to make sure that, every day for every patient that comes to us, we can provide the best possible medical care,” Herman said.

North Carolina patients will see no immediate changes as a result of the ruling because most of the provisions of the act that were challenged do not take effect until 2014.
“That challenges us to gear up to find new and innovative ways to provide the health services that people need and demand,” Herman said.

At a separate news event Thursday morning, Dr. Paul Cunningham, dean of the Brody School of Medicine, said the school’s mission to create more doctors who treat patients and conduct research will continue.

“There’s no doubt that the increase in people who qualify for and carry health insurance will benefit us,” Cunningham said.

The new view of health care is more as a societal issue than an insurance issue, Herman said.

“We, as a society, will have to take a look at how we spend our (health care) money and ask if we’re making the right choices,” Herman said.

Patients will be challenged to face their individual responsibilities to look at the behaviors that contribute to chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes, Herman said.

“We used to charge some people more for the cost of their care so we can pay for others,” he said. “This decision should level that playing field.”

One noticeable shift will be away from the emergency room as a point of entry into the health care system for those who previously had no insurance for primary care services, at great expense to providers and insurance holders.

“If we can get people to access the right person in the medical care system at the right place and time, it will be more affordable,” Herman said. “We don’t want people coming in when they are very ill, when, two days before, they could have been kept from getting that ill.”

The new health care approach will challenge and allow care providers to find more creative ways to provide effective services in more efficient ways, Herman said.

“But it will also reward us for doing that,” he said. “When more people have insurance, it makes decisions easier.”

Herman said the ruling should also be good news for local employers that provide health insurance coverage.

“If everybody in the country is insured (and contributing through their payment), the cost for insurance should go down. This should be more fair,” he said.
Jan Van Riper, director of the health care reform initiative at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, said the mechanism of the law will allow area providers to eliminate waste and inefficiencies.

“It encourages a great deal more coordinated care, rather than providers working in individual silos and not communicating with each other,” Van Riper said. “The idea is that the cost of providing care will go down over a period of time. That’s the hope, anyway, and the underlying rationale.”

Greenville’s two congressional representatives expressed divergent political reactions to the Supreme Court decision.

“I was very, very disappointed by today’s decision,” said U.S. Rep. Walter B. Jones, R-N.C., of Farmville, speaking by phone from Washington, D.C. “I believe the continued growth of government in the private lives of people ... is very dangerous, quite frankly.”

Jones said he has “always been an advocate of fixing health care problems and supporting those who need help, but have always said it should not be a federal takeover of Americans’ lives. There are things we could be doing, but this is not the answer.”

Rep. G.K. Butterfield, D-N.C., issued a statement saying the Supreme Court decision is a tremendous victory for the nation.

“The law protects several under-served communities — from seniors and children to women and small business owners,” Butterfield said. “But it also benefits all Americans by providing access to free preventative services, expanded prescription drug coverage, and allowing young adults to remain on their parents’ insurance until the age of 26, just to name a few guaranteed benefits.”

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or 252-329-9571.
I am a young professional living in the university neighborhood and I wanted to voice my support for a change to the ordinance allowing no more than three unrelated tenants to rent a house. I have lived on Third Street for five years and I have seen a continual rise in crime as students leave this area and flock to more affordable apartment complexes on the outskirts of town. Since it is financially unfeasible for most students to afford a four- or five-bedroom house splitting rent three ways, it is easy to see why it is difficult for landlords to make necessary renovations to some of these beautiful bigger houses in the neighborhood. If we want the university and town to flourish we need to create an area where students can live and be able to walk to class or uptown and feel safe, at any time of the day.

I believe one way we can take a step to reach this goal is by changing the ordinance to make it easier for tenants to rent some of these bigger houses and actually afford to live in them for a couple of years. I feel that if this area was more affordable for students, the landlords would be able to fix up these historic houses and restore the beauty that this neighborhood once had.

MARTIN TANSKI
Greenville
Lauren Perdue can pack her bags for London. The former J.H. Rose Rampant and current Virginia Cavalier sealed a spot on the U.S. Olympic swim team as a member of the 4x200 relay team.

Perdue clenched the berth with a fourth-place finish in the 200-meter freestyle finals at the Olympic Trials in Omaha, Neb., on Thursday night. She finished with a time of 1 minute, 57.75 seconds, beating her previous best of 1:58.28.

“I honestly did not feel very fast,” Perdue said. “I went into it really positive and had a great attitude.”

Perdue’s father, Dr. Phil Perdue, was overjoyed with Thursday’s result. “It unbelievable,” Phil Perdue, who is in Omaha for the Trials, said. “It’s been a long road. A lot of swim meets. A lot of practices. A lot of foregone vacations.

“On top of all that, she had back surgery and we thought it might end her career. But somehow with prayer, fortitude and determination, she defied the odds. I just couldn’t believe it.”
Lauren Perdue still has a busy week ahead. She will be competing in the women’s 100 freestyle today and the 50 freestyle on Sunday.

Fellow former Rampant and current Cavalier Matt Houser will be attempting to join Perdue in London. He will be competing in the 200 individual medley and the 200 butterfly. Earlier this week, Houser placed 71st out of 113 swimmers in the 400 IM.

**Butts reaches finals**

East Carolina’s Tynita Butts is a step closer to making the Olympic team after tying for first place in the high jump preliminaries during the Olympic Trials in Eugene, Ore., on Thursday.

She is one of 12 competitors to reach Sunday’s finals.

Competing in the second of two flights, Butts cleared 1.79 and 1.83 meters on her first two attempts.

She was one of only six competitors to avoid a miss in the preliminaries.

— ECU Media Relations

SWIMMING
NCSU issues warning about drinking water on main campus

From staff reports

RALEIGH—Officials issued a warning Thursday morning recommending that people not drink tap water on the main campus at N.C. State University.

According to a safety alert on the school’s website, an odor in the water was identified Wednesday at three locations on the main campus. As a precaution, the administration has asked anyone on campus, including visitors or youth attending summer camps, not to use the water on the main campus for drinking, cooking or other ingesting, including brushing teeth.

The campus water is OK for hand washing and showering. The affected area includes the main campus between Western Boulevard and Hillsborough Street, Method Road and Pullen Road.

Health and safety personnel are sampling and testing water on campus, and facilities staff are flushing the water system. The university has taken measures to ensure that food in dining halls is prepared without using tap water. The university is providing bottled water and drinks to residence halls, dining facilities and summer youth camps.
Those who will be on the main campus are asked to bring their own drinking water or bottled water for use Thursday and Friday.

The water alert is unrelated to a sewage overflow of 115,200 gallons reported by the City of Raleigh.

The overflow was caused by a blockage in a sanitary sewer main at 21 Stanhope Drive. It was discovered Tuesday and cleaned up the same day. Officials determined that the sewer had been overflowing for more than four days into a storm drain that discharges into the Rocky Branch Creek in the vicinity of NCSU.

NCSU spokesman Mick Kulikowski said, however, that the two incidents are unrelated. The suspicious odor is coming from tap water that doesn’t come from the creek contaminated by the spill.
Greensboro doctor elected to fill out UNC board vacancy

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C.–A Greensboro doctor is joining the University of North Carolina Board of Governors.

The state House elected Aldona Wos on Thursday to the 32-member governing board of the UNC system's 17 campuses. She is filling out the three years remaining on the four-year term of Brent Barringer of Cary, who resigned last week.

Wos is a native of Poland and the former U.S. ambassador to Estonia. She's also been helping raise money and support for Republican gubernatorial candidate Pat McCrory.

Wos was the only candidate for the vacancy on the ballot of House members.

Republicans in charge of the Legislature have been putting their mark on the board composition since taking majorities of the House and Senate in 2011.
Maryland athletics’ financial woes reveal a broken college sports revenue model

By Liz Clarke

With its multimillion-dollar deficit mounting and no deep-pocketed donor to cover the shortfall, the University of Maryland’s athletic department will proceed with plans to cut at least seven of its 27 varsity teams this weekend. The downsizing is an attempt to correct an unsustainable pattern many households know well: Spending more than you earn.

But the forces behind the bleak reality in College Park aren’t unique to Maryland. Athletic departments at nine out of 10 public universities that compete in big-time sports spent more money than they generated last year — and many are grappling with the question of whether dropping some sports is the solution.

Unless runaway spending is brought under control, according to financial data and those who study them, it’s only a matter of time before other schools are forced to follow Maryland’s lead.

Over the last five years, 205 varsity teams have been dropped in NCAA Division I, the top ranks of college sports — 133 for men, 72 for women. Men’s tennis, gymnastics and wrestling have been hit particularly hard.
Rutgers cut six sports in 2007 to address a multimillion-dollar deficit. Brigham Young, Clemson, Washington and UCLA have also pared offerings. And cash-strapped California Berkeley announced in 2010 it was cutting five sports because of budget problems, before an aggressive fundraising blitz spared the teams.

No major university has cut as deeply as Maryland, however, and some point to its budget woes as a warning that the current model of college sports, marked by overzealous spending in pursuit of success in football and men’s basketball, is broken.

“Quite frankly, I think we’ve gotten ourselves in a terrible situation with intercollegiate athletics, with the cost of running a program really out of proportion to the basic purpose of our universities,” said William E. “Brit” Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland and a co-chairman of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics.

Added John Nichols, co-chairman of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, the leading faculty voice on the issue: “What seems to be happening all too often nationwide is that the breadth and depth of athletic departments are being cut. It’s becoming the victim of a financial need to feed this commercial beast.”

Texas, Ohio State and a handful of other universities aren’t feeling the pain. That’s because their football teams are so wildly successful they bankroll their entire athletics department — and more.

But that’s the exception. According to USA Today’s most recent annual survey of sports spending, culled from data supplied to the NCAA, just 22 of 227 public universities in NCAA Division I turned a profit in 2011. The rest, like Maryland, lost money.

The perfect storm

There are several factors behind the escalating financial pressures. Spending on sports is rising at nearly twice the rate of spending on academics, according to the Knight Commission. Coaching salaries and construction costs are up dramatically, as football-playing schools, chasing the holy grail of a major bowl appearance, expand stadiums and lure big-name coaches capable of filling them. Scandal-plagued Ohio State in November, for example, guaranteed Urban Meyer a $4 million base salary.

Meanwhile, state appropriations for higher education are declining, which heightens pressure on athletic departments to sell out venues and boost fundraising.
In this environment, a downturn in ticket sales, coupled with a heavy debt burden, can be catastrophic. At Maryland, those factors converged in a perfect storm in recent years. The school’s athletics department deficit, now $4.7 million, is projected to reach $17.6 million by 2017 if not addressed.

Convinced its football stadium was too small and its basketball arena too outmoded for its fan base, Maryland over the past decade expanded Byrd Stadium and added luxury suites, and built the Comcast Center. At the time of construction, officials said the upgrades would pay for themselves through a jump in ticket revenue. Instead, Maryland’s football and basketball teams have struggled, and attendance and revenue have dropped.

As a result, spending on buildings and grounds has soared nearly 78 percent over the past five years, from $4.6 million to $8.2 million, according to data supplied to the NCAA. Debt service on the construction projects alone totals $7.9 million this year — up from $6.9 million in 2010-11. That’s more than 11 percent of Maryland’s athletic department budget, and the figure escalates each year like bad credit-card debt.

That’s just one line-item in a Maryland athletics operating budget that increased 24 percent over the last five years, from $49.5 million in 2005-06 to $61.6 million in 2010-11. Spending on the Terrapins’ coaching staff climbed at an even higher rate, rising nearly 30 percent, from $18.7 million to $24.3 million.

Meanwhile, total revenue increased only 15 percent, from $53.6 million to $61.6 million in the same span.

And, for the first time since the NCAA financial reports have been required, Maryland football actually lost money in 2010-11, with expenses ($12,538,482) outpacing revenue ($12,065,000) by $473,482.

That deficit alone is nearly enough to fund one of the eight teams Maryland announced in November would be dropped: Men’s and women’s swimming and diving, acrobatics and tumbling, men’s tennis, women’s water polo and men’s cross country and indoor and outdoor track and field. Men’s outdoor track may get a reprieve this weekend if it reaches an interim fundraising target set by the university.

So, too, is the $500,000 in guaranteed annual compensation that Maryland is paying its new offensive coordinator, Mike Locksley, hired in January to help turn around a football team that finished 2-10 last season. And the $3 million cost of the new synthetic turf football field at Byrd Stadium could
fund five varsity teams for a year. Maryland has declined to identify the private donor who footed the bill for the field.

Athletic Director Kevin Anderson, who was hired two years ago, says Maryland’s student-athletes have been under-served as a result of the athletic department’s chronic operating deficits and deserve better.

“I did not come to the University of Maryland to cut sports,” he said, “but dire situations require decisive action.”

The reality is that in the hyper-competitive environment of college sports, in which athletic departments must spend money to make money, Maryland’s budget priorities are more the norm than the exception.

No one needs to explain that to NCAA President Mark Emmert. He was president of the University of Washington in 2009 when the athletic department dropped its nationally ranked men’s and women’s swim teams to address a $3 million deficit. The same year, Washington hired a head football coach whose annual salary was more than the budget of both teams combined.

According to R. Scott Kretchmar, a Penn State professor of exercise and sport sciences, it’s all but impossible for university presidents to ramp down spending on the revenue sports of football and men’s basketball, even as they confront deficits.

“Presidents are obligated to raise money, and it’s the football and basketball events that bring the big donors and trustees in,” said Kretchmar, who served as Penn State’s faculty athletic representative to the NCAA for 10 years. “There’s virtually nothing else at the university that has the cache and excitement that big-time sports does. Presidents are saying, ‘I can’t go down that road of scaling back big-time sports.’ Unilateral disarmament is nothing that will fly.”

Some hope that the four-team college football playoff that was approved this week will bail out athletic departments in distress. A playoff could generate as much as $500 million in new revenue, according to industry insiders. That could mean an additional $2-3 million apiece for the 120 schools in the NCAA’s most prestigious football division, the Football Bowl Subdivision.

But if past is prelude, the newfound playoff money will only increase the cost of competing and widen the gulf between college sports’ “haves and have-nots,” Kretchmar predicted.
“Every cash cow that has come down the line that I have seen has been a temporary stop-gap,” Kretchmar said. “A playoff system is not going to be a panacea in any sense of the word. It will help balance the books of schools in the red, but with the escalation of salaries and facilities, it’s a black hole.”

**Where to go from here?**

So what’s the remedy for college sports’ spending compulsion?

The Knight Commission, a group of university presidents, trustees and former athletes who advocate for reform in college sports, offered a road map in a 2010 report, “Restoring the Balance: Dollars, Values and the Future of College Sports.” In it, the panel recommended the NCAA require colleges to publish the true cost of their athletic programs in comparable, complete terms, reflecting not only revenue and expenses but also the often-hidden debt service on facilities and subsidies from their universities’ general funds.

It also proposed that the NCAA cap the number of “non-coaching” jobs on certain teams — an expense that has ballooned in football, for example, with the addition of directors of football recruiting, operations, player development and strength-and-conditioning coaches for every position. And it recommended the NCAA reduce the number of football scholarships allowed by at least 10 from the current 85.

To date, none of those recommendations has gained traction.

“The people who could and should be responsible for fixing what almost certainly is going to be a train wreck are either unwilling or unable to do it,” Nichols said. “Unless you assume that television money is a bottomless pit — and there are no limits to the amount of money that television networks will invest — there is going to be a day of reckoning.”

That leaves two options for substantive change — both of them political and neither particularly palatable.

One: Persuade Congress to grant an antitrust exemption that would permit the NCAA to cap spending — whether on coaches’ salaries, scholarship costs or recruiting.

Two: Wait until the headlong rush for more money becomes so nakedly transparent that the Internal Revenue Service declares college sports a for-profit enterprise and revokes its tax-exempt status.

That’s a doomsday scenario but one Kirwan believes is plausible.
“Absolutely,” he said. “We’re moving further and further from the stated purpose of intercollegiate athletics. It has just become a big business.

“Maybe it sounds like we’re crying wolf. But sometimes the wolf is really at the door. And it will be if we continue with this madness.”
U-Va. seeks normalcy after Sullivan reinstatement, but questions linger

By Jenna Johnson and Anita Kumar

CHARLOTTESVILLE — Donors made pledges to the university. Its president met with her staff and higher-education leaders in Richmond. The governor pondered appointments to the school’s governing board.

On Wednesday, the University of Virginia sought to resume its summer routine a day after the reinstatement of President Teresa Sullivan ended a prolonged leadership crisis. But questions lingered about the school’s future.

In the morning, Sullivan reported to work at Madison Hall, met with staff, called a few major donors, got in touch with several presidents at other universities.

In the afternoon, she was spotted in the hallway of the state Capitol in Richmond, en route to a gubernatorial advisory committee meeting. She entered with John O. “Dubby” Wynne of Virginia Beach, a former U-Va. rector who was on the board that hired Sullivan in 2010.

Sullivan’s “putting her head down and getting back to work,” U-Va. spokeswoman Carol Wood said.
The university has been seeking to reassure donors who were upset by the tumult that ensued when the popular Sullivan was ousted on June 10, less than two years into her term. The governing Board of Visitors unanimously voted to reinstate her Tuesday.

After the vote, Wood said, two anonymous donors made pledges of $1 million apiece, in explicit support of Sullivan, and 657 gifts were made online. The online donations, ranging from $5 to $10,000, totaled more than $218,000.

Tom Faulders, president of the U-Va. alumni association, said 6,000 alums had weighed in over an 11-day period by commenting through the association’s Web site. About 10 percent of them vowed to withhold donations until the president was reinstated, the rector resigned or the entire board was removed — or some combination of such changes. Six or 7 percent expressed faith in the board. A majority complained about the process that led to Sullivan’s ouster.

Faulders said a few donations came in Wednesday from alums proud of the resolution.

Rector Helen E. Dragas, the head of the board, made no further public statements after apologizing Tuesday for her actions in Sullivan’s ouster.

Dragas and other board members, as well as the entire university community, awaited decisions from Richmond on the future of a board that until this month was largely unknown.

Dragas’s term and the terms of three other members expire Sunday. Dragas is eligible for reappointment to another four-year term. In addition, there is a vacancy created by the resignation of Vice Rector Mark Kington and a new seat created by the legislature. That means that in coming days, Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R) will be able to make six appointments to what will be a board with 17 voting members. An announcement from the governor could come as early as Friday.

In Richmond, McDonnell declined to comment on his thinking about the appointments. But he told reporters that he believed that it “can be a real important moment where administrators and faculty can work together with boards and alumni to forge a clear, bright, productive and entrepreneurial path ahead for education.”

McDonnell applauded the cooperative posture Dragas and Sullivan had taken. “Both of them made good statements and set the tone for working together in the future,” he said.
Still, observers pointed to unresolved questions: How would major donors and alumni react to the crisis and its resolution? When would U-Va. grapple with strategic plans, budget cuts and other issues raised in the debate over Sullivan’s presidency? What would the governing board and the president do to heal rifts?

Sen. R. Creigh Deeds (D-Bath) said the reinstatement of Sullivan ended the immediate challenge but longer-term issues remain. “You’ve got to be concerned about the future,” Deeds said. “What kind of hard feelings are there? I don’t know what the future holds.”

Here on the campus, there was an urge for reconciliation. Law professor George Cohen, chairman of the Faculty Senate, noted that the president herself had pledged to turn the page.

“She said she can work with the rector,” Cohen said. “And I think we can work with the rector as well.”

Student body president Johnny Vroom said he hoped the controversy would fade.

“I’m just really happy we can put a lot of this behind us,” Vroom said. “It’s important to move forward. . . . There’s no point in focusing on what had happened.”

Laura Vozzella, Donna St. George and Daniel de Vise contributed to this report. Kumar reported from Richmond.