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## **Homegrown biotech eyes federal deals to fuel growth**

**Baltimore Business Journal - by Sue Schultz Staff**

Profectus Biosciences Inc., a Baltimore HIV and cancer research company, will add 20 new local jobs by 2009 and could be awarded more federal funding to expand its development of vaccines.

The small company was spun out of the Institute of Human Virology in 2005 to commercialize research spearheaded by Dr. Robert C. Gallo, the famed AIDS discoverer.

It now generates business from biotech companies, pharmaceutical groups, federal contracts and organizations like the National Cancer Institute. The company landed a license agreement to develop new technology for cancer treatment from the National Cancer Institute in May. Profectus will also do more work itself on HIV vaccine development, which it had outsourced to other companies.

The company raised \$4.5 million in venture funding in July and could look for more federal money to handle growth in its research business, said Shawn Patrick O'Brien, CEO of Profectus. He said the company moved into a larger space in Baltimore City this month to gear up for the expansion.

The company has leased 16,000 square feet at the former Guilford Research Center, now owned and managed by BioMed Realty Trust. Profectus had previously leased 5,300 square feet at the Catonsville-based bwtech@UMBC incubator.

O'Brien said the company considered a move to one of the city's newest bioparks — University of Maryland, Baltimore BioPark and the Science + Technology Center at Johns Hopkins — but needed affordable space that could be ready immediately.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County officials said the move is a good sign for the region. But UMBC is working to develop space large enough for growing companies like Profectus.

Amulet Pharmaceuticals and Lentigen Corp, two of Baltimore's fastest growing biotech companies and graduates of the incubator, left the region for cheaper space in Montgomery County. Profectus didn't consider space in Montgomery County, O'Brien said. The company wants to stay close to research at IHV in Baltimore.

UMBC plans to develop 50,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet in the region to help companies that have outgrown incubator space continue to progress, said Ellen Hemmerly, executive director of bwtech@UMBC.

"If we have the right kind of space, they may stay," Hemmerly said.