



**CHRISTIANA CARE
HEALTH SYSTEM**

Helen F. Graham Cancer Center Marks First Year as National Cancer Institute Pilot Site

Community Cancer Centers Program focuses on clinical research

The Helen F. Graham Cancer Center at Christiana Care concludes its first year in the National Cancer Institute Community Cancer Centers Program (NCCCP), building on its established clinical research trials and multispecialty cancer care programs. Designed to extend National Cancer Institute (NCI) cancer research, the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center is one of only 14 cancer centers nationwide selected to participate in this program.

“We have made considerable progress toward achieving the major goals of the pilot,” explains Nicholas J. Petrelli, M.D., Bank of America endowed medical director of the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center. “Serving as part of the NCI pilot complements existing programs here and is already making an impact in Delaware—our cancer death rate continues to drop at twice the national rate.”

The NCCCP expands cancer research already performed at community hospitals and among community-based oncology private practices—where most cancer patients receive their care. This allows more Americans to access research-based cancer care. Evidence from a wide range of studies suggests that cancer patients diagnosed and treated in a setting of multispecialty care and clinical research may live longer and have a better quality of life.

“One year into this initiative, NCCCP is already helping lead our nation’s efforts to find better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer,” says NCI Director John E. Niederhuber, M.D. “These efforts are also beginning to define how we can best bring state-of-the-art care and earliest phase clinical research to millions of patients in the communities where they live.”

“The pilot is beginning to define for the NCI what it will take to build a national network of community cancer centers that are fully engaged with the research community and that provide the latest evidence-based, multidisciplinary care and

treatment to patients of all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in their home communities," adds Dr. Petrelli.

Other key NCCCP components include:

- **Expanding clinical trials, especially in minority communities.** Christiana Care's involvement in the NCI-sponsored clinical trials program offers patients cutting-edge treatment for any cancer. Accrual to these trials is 10 times the national average and the program has received several national awards for its success. At any given time, Christiana Care has at least 700 patients enrolled in as many as 130 different studies.
- **Reducing disparities in cancer health care.** This enables minorities and underserved patients to more effectively benefit from the most current, evidence-based care.
- **Collecting, storing and sharing tissue and blood samples for research.** Christiana Care's Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and a separate Tissue Procurement Center for translational cancer research places the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center at the forefront of establishing national standards for handling biospecimens bound for research laboratories. These standards will improve cancer research and the development of advanced therapies custom-tailored to individual patients.
- **Exploring the use of a national database of electronic medical records.** Christiana Care is moving to decentralize, paper-based records systems into computerized data that will improve both cancer research and patient care through NCI's Cancer Bioinformatics Grid (CaBIG).

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About Christiana Care Health System

Christiana Care Health System is one of the region's largest health care providers, serving Delaware and neighboring areas in Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. A not-for-profit teaching hospital, Christiana Care is recognized as a regional center for excellence in cardiology, cancer and women's health services, as well as for its Level-I trauma care and Level-3 neonatal intensive care (both highest capability). Christiana Hospital is the only Level I trauma center between Philadelphia and Baltimore. Christiana Care includes two hospitals with 1,100 patient beds, a home health care service, preventive medicine, rehabilitation services, a network of primary care physicians and an extensive range of outpatient services. With more than 10,000 employees, Christiana Care is the largest private employer in Delaware and the 10th largest employer in the Philadelphia region. In 2007 Christiana Care had more

than \$1.5 billion in total patient revenue and provided the community with \$35.7 million of free care and medicine last year. Find more information at www.christianacare.org