



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Christiana Care Increases Access to Dental Care in Southern Delaware

DOVER, DE - Christiana Care Health System and Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. today signed an agreement to increase access to dental care for Kent and Sussex County uninsured residents.

Through this formal affiliation, Christiana Care will place two staff dentists and establish a rotation of general practice dental residents at Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. in Dover. “There has been a decades-long scarcity of access to dental care for the uninsured in rural areas of Delaware,” said Edwin L. Granite, DMD, chair, Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery and Hospital Dentistry at Christiana Care. “This agreement, like others Christiana Care initiated and established with community health care facilities, is designed to address this long-standing need immediately, effectively, and directly.”

Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. Chief Executive Officer Debra Singletary said, “Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. appreciates Christiana Care’s interest in collaborating with Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. The rotation through the Kent Community Health Center of fourth year dental residents not only helps to fulfill practical experience requirements but it also helps to expand access to dental health services for 19,000 uninsured persons residing in Central Delaware. As the federally qualified health center serving Central Delaware, Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. is pleased to partner with Christiana Care in this very important and historic initiative.”

Christiana Care will provide rotating general practice dental residents to Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. under the supervision of staff dentists Richard L. Sklut, DDS, Delmarva Rural Ministries, Inc. Chief Dental Officer, and Dr. Dan Matthews. Through this affiliation, the staff dentists and rotating dental residents will be located in Delmarva Rural Ministries’ Kent Community Health Center, have office hours five days a week, and be able to see nearly 350 patients per month. Patients can either schedule an appointment or walk-in.



“Thanks to Christiana Care’s efforts, this new agreement is a major step forward in increasing access to dental care in the southern part of the state,” added Dr. Sklut. “Delmarva Rural Ministries becomes the primary point of access to dental care for low income residents and the migrant community in Kent and Sussex counties. Now, to know that these residents have access to a dentist, it will have a positive impact on their overall health.”

Access to dental care and proper dental health is essential to overall health. According to *Healthy People 2010*, oral diseases and conditions may have a significant impact on general health; some poor general health conditions also may affect oral health status. Studies point to associations between periodontal diseases and low birth weight and premature births as well as between periodontitis and heart disease and stroke.

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About Christiana Care Health System

Christiana Care Health System, which dates back to 1888, is one of the region's largest not-for profit health care providers, serving the people of Delaware as well as neighboring Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. A teaching hospital, Christiana Care is recognized as a regional center for excellence in cardiology, cancer and women's health services, as well as Level-I trauma care and Level-3 neonatal intensive care (both highest intensity). Christiana Care operates two hospitals, transitional care services, preventive medicine and rehabilitation services, a network of primary care physician offices and an extensive range of outpatient and home health services. Christiana Care provided \$32.4 million of free care and medicine last year.

About Delmarva Rural Health Ministries

Delmarva Rural Ministries offers holistic, empowering services to those with modest incomes, including seasonal and migrant farmworkers, throughout the Delmarva Peninsula. Through the provision of health care, housing, advocacy, and other community services in a compassionate and culturally sensitive manner, we strive to eliminate the inequities faced by many in each of these areas