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### **Christiana Care takes steps to improve survival rate from lung cancer**

*Only program of its type in Delaware Valley seeks  
more than 500 volunteers to undergo early detection screening*

Wilmington, DE (Sept. 3, 2003) -- It is a cold, hard fact that the overwhelming majority of individuals diagnosed with lung cancer will die from the disease. But studies reveal that finding lung cancer early is the key to increasing the number of patients who survive it.

#### **CT scan to identify lung cancer early**

Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center is participating in a cutting edge, international study that will improve the lives of Delawareans at risk for developing this dreaded disease. A research team from Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center has entered the Early Lung Cancer Action Project (ELCAP), which is coordinated by the Weill Medical Center at Cornell University in New York. There are 15 participating sites worldwide. Christiana Care is the only participant in the Delaware Valley. The study tests a screening technique using a low-dose computerized tomography (CT) scan to identify lung cancer at an early stage.

"We can have a dramatic impact on the survival rate if we can identify high-risk patients and offer them a screening technique that is low-radiation dosed, quick, easy, painless and very accurate," says Thomas Bauer, M.D., thoracic surgeon who is leading the ELCAP study at Christiana Care. "That's why we have agreed to participate in the study. It is important to offer this state-of-the-science cancer prevention opportunity to our community."

A \$750,000 grant from AstraZeneca will help fund the program. "AstraZeneca is proud to play an integral role in ensuring the success of the Lung Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Program at Christiana Care," said David Brennan, president and CEO of AstraZeneca US upon announcing the grant in March. "We're committed to improving the quality of life for cancer survivors across the globe - but we cannot do it alone. With the help of dedicated partners like Christiana Care, we can all advance in the fight against cancer."

Nationwide, an estimated 175,000 people will be diagnosed with lung cancer this year; 153,000 will die from it, outnumbering deaths from the three most common types of cancer -- breast, colorectal and prostate -- combined. In Delaware, an estimated 600 people will be diagnosed with the disease this year, many of whom will be treated at Christiana Care.

“This team effort led by Dr. Bauer is delivering cutting edge clinical research to the people of Delaware with the goal of improving survival and quality of life to smokers who are destined to get lung cancer,” states Nicholas J. Petrelli, M.D., MBNA-endowed medical director of the Helen F Graham Cancer Center. “It is a project long overdue in this state, if anything for the sake of the next generation,” he adds.

### **Identifying candidates**

Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer. The average age to start smoking in Delaware is 13. “By age 40,” according to Dr. Bauer, “most of these people have been smoking the equivalent of a pack a day for 20 years.”

The best survival is in patients who are surgical candidates. But currently only 30 percent of patients diagnosed with lung cancer are surgical candidates and they are often in a late stage of the disease. “If we can increase that figure to 50 percent, we can have a dramatic impact in Delaware on the treatment of lung cancer,” says Dr. Bauer.

“If we can offer this program to our patients and only make a small impact,” Bauer continues, “a small impact is still 10, 20, or 30 people who will potentially be treated and cured.” If lung cancer is diagnosed at Stage I, the patient’s chance of living five years is between 65 and 85 percent, he adds.

Christiana Care needs to enroll 500 volunteers who are at high risk for lung cancer to participate in the study; 50 individuals have signed on already. To be eligible to participate, an individual must meet the following criteria:

- Age 40 or older with a history of smoking equivalent to at least a pack of cigarettes a day for 20 years (or other equivalents, such as two packs a day for ten years);
- Fit to have lung surgery, if necessary;
- Have a primary care physician or willing to be assigned one;
- No signs or symptoms of lung cancer; and
- Willing to have a repeat CT scan in one year.

### **Installation of new CT scan**

Christiana Care has installed a new CT scanner at the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center. The availability of the new scanner will increase the number of people who can be tested.

In addition to the screening, patients are invited to participate in a smoking cessation program. "Patients have told us that after they have received the CT scan, they have a new lease on life," says Barbara Marconi, RN, BSN, OCN, research nurse at Christiana Care and study coordinator. "It has given them an opportunity to stop smoking and change their lifestyle and habits. It is a 'wake-up' call for them."

Participation in the study is offered to patients at no charge. For more information on the study or participation opportunities, please call Barbara Marconi at 623-5227 (62-ELCAP).

### **Christiana Care Health System**

As a select recipient of National Cancer Institute funding as a community clinical oncology program, Christiana Care is an active participant in multiple cancer prevention and treatment research studies. Patient enrollment in clinical trials at Christiana Care is five times the national rate.

Christiana Care Health System, which traces its roots 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, long-term and transitional care services and an extensive range of outpatient and home health services. Last year, Christiana Care provided \$42.8 million of charity care.

**Note to newswriters/editors:** volunteers who have gone through the screening and have quit smoking as a result are available to interview.