



**For Immediate Release**

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## **ACE inhibitors considered primary therapy for congestive heart failure at Christiana Care**

Wilmington, DE (January 29, 2004) - While congestive heart failure (CHF) statistically ranks as the leading cause of hospitalization in the U.S., a recent clinical study highlighted that not every health care provider follows best-practice guidelines when discharging patients with the disease. But, at Christiana Care, there are stringent heart failure care management guidelines in place to make sure all patients get the care they need.

A class of blood pressure medicines known as Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, which have been a cornerstone of CHF therapy for more than 10 years, are often not prescribed to patients upon discharge, according to a recent University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) study of nearly 60,000 patients at 260 hospitals across the country over 14 months. The UCLA data, which received prominent attention in the media, indicates that nearly a third of all CHF patients in the study were discharged without a prescription for ACE inhibitors. At Christiana Care, approximately 80 percent of admitted patients with CHF are prescribed ACE inhibitors when they are released from the hospital, according to Data Acquisition Manager Donna Mahoney of Christiana Care's Care Management Processes team.

Some patients can't take ACE inhibitors because of serious allergies, kidney problems or side effects like cough, according to Michael E. Stillabower, M.D., who currently heads Christiana Care's heart failure care management guidelines team. However, Stillabower says, the patients cited in the UCLA study were known to be "ideal" candidates for ACE treatment, clearly presenting a great opportunity for care improvement. "ACE inhibitors are at the top of our algorithm for CHF therapy," points out Mahoney. "Our guidelines indicate they're always the first thing to consider."

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 more than \$37 million of charity care.