



Immediate release

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**Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center
recognized as national leader in cancer clinical trial participation**

Ranks first in nation in RTOG CCOP patient enrollment

Wilmington, DE (March 10, 2004) -- Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center has been recognized as a national leader in cancer clinical trial participation by the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG), a research base for the National Cancer Institute's Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP).

During 2003, Christiana Care enrolled 44 patients in national radiation oncology clinical trials, according to RTOG. This ranks Christiana Care number one in accrual rates among the RTOG research centers that participate in the CCOP. The CCOP program, established by the National Cancer Institute in 1983, consists of a select group of 50 research centers in the United States and Puerto Rico that ensures cancer patients have access to quality research and medical care in their own communities.

Ranking of seventh overall

RTOG is comprised of several hundred other academic and community-based cancer research centers besides those that participate in CCOP. When patient participation rates of all RTOG institutions are taken into account, Christiana Care ranks seventh. "Christiana Care should be proud of this high participation rate," says Walter J. Curran, Jr., M.D., RTOG group chair and clinical director of the Kimmel Cancer Center at Thomas Jefferson University. "It shows that Christiana Care is a national leader in cancer research and underscores the vital role it plays in the Delaware Valley."

"The main reason for the high numbers of people enrolled in clinical trials at Christiana Care is the multidisciplinary approach to cancer care at the Cancer Center as well as the dedicated commitment of the physicians and staff," says Nicholas J. Petrelli, M.D., MBNA-endowed medical director of Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center.



Importance of clinical trials

Cancer clinical trials contribute to knowledge and progress against cancer. If a new treatment proves effective in a study, it may become a new standard treatment that can help many patients. Because of progress made through clinical trials, many people treated for cancer are now living longer. Also, individual patients who take part in a cancer clinical trial may be helped by the treatment(s) they receive.

RTOG is one of five CCOP study groups in which Christiana Care participates. Christiana Care consistently exceeds the national accrual rate to clinical trials overall, with more than 13 percent of new cancer patients participating in a clinical trial. The national participation rate is 2 to 3 percent, according to the National Cancer Institute.

About Christiana Care

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. Christiana Care, a 2004 Distinguished Hospital for Clinical Excellence, provided more than \$37 million of charity care last year.

About the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group

RTOG is a multi-institutional national clinical cooperative group funded by the National Cancer Institute and headquartered in the Philadelphia office of the American College of Radiology. RTOG has more than 30 years of experience in conducting clinical trials and is comprised of 250 of the major research institutions nationally and in Canada. The group currently has more than 40 active studies that involve radiation therapy alone or in conjunction with surgery and/or chemotherapeutic drugs, which investigate quality of life issues and their effects on the cancer patient.

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