



For Immediate Release

**Contact: Natalie Dyke
(302) 327-3306**

Two dietitians receive prestigious recognition

Wilmington, DE (July 6, 2004) – Two dietitians from the Eugene du Pont Preventive Medicine & Rehabilitation Institute recently received recognition from the Delaware Dietetic Association and the American Dietetic Association for leadership and service in nutrition.

Ellen Clevenger-Firley, MS, RD, CDN, chief of Nutrition Services, received the Outstanding Dietitian of the Year Award for 2004. The award recognizes her accomplishments as a dietitian at both the state and national level. She was also nominated for the prestigious Lenna Francis Cooper Award from The American Dietetic Association. To be nominated for this honor, a candidate must be an accomplished and recognized public speaker and serve as a source of inspiration and be an outstanding role model in the field of dietetics. In addition, the candidate's experiences should demonstrate her commitment to human welfare and advancing the health of the public. "With Ellen's outstanding leadership and expertise as chief of Nutrition Services, she has created a strong department with focus on disease prevention, community health and weight management making her an excellent candidate for this award," says Cheryl Patterson, RD, CDE, clinical dietitian.

Julie Walenta, MPH, RD, CDN, clinical dietitian, received the Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year Award for 2004. The award recognizes Walenta's leadership as current President of the Delaware Dietetic Association and her promotion of optimal health and nutrition status for the community served by Christiana Care. "Since coming here, Julie has become extremely involved and dedicated to Christiana Care's Weight Management & Gastric Bypass programs, while continuing to support the many other nutrition programs offered at the Preventive Medicine & Rehabilitation Institute," says Clevenger-Firley.

After six months of operation, the 10-bed Express Admissions Unit (EAU) on 5C at Christiana Hospital continues to assist nursing care and reduce length-of-stay.

The goals of the EAU at Christiana Hospital are to decompress the Emergency Department (ED), improve the comfort and care of admitted patients moving from the ED to the medical/surgery units and reduce the average length-of-stay by beginning prescribed treatment more quickly.

The average length-of-stay for patients moving from the ED to the EAU and then to a unit is 1.36 days less than for patients who move from the ED directly to a floor unit.

"I think it is a great concept," says Suzanne Heath, RN, BSN, nurse manager of the EAU. "The EAU nurses process all of the admission paperwork and actually begin discharge planning. A plan of care is initiated and medications are started, all within a short time of the patient's arrival," she says.

EAU Nurse Angela Barone, RN, concurs. "Many patients feel their care is moving along faster," she says.

The "jump start" helps the patient, and it has a positive impact on the unit nurses. "The nurses in the med/surg units receive a fully admitted patient, more like a transfer from one unit to another," Heath explains. She says when a patient arrives on a unit from the ED, the admission must be processed by a nurse in addition to the nurse's other duties. "Admissions take a lot of time. But, when a patient comes from the EAU, the patient goes right into the nurse's workflow," she says.

The unit has also managed patients who otherwise would have come in through the ED. "We sometimes receive patients directly from physicians' offices instead of the patient being sent to the



ED. The patient doesn't have to go through the triage process, when the physician just wants them admitted," Heath says.

One of the keys to the success of the EAU is a close working relationship with the ED, ancillary departments and Bed Board. "We work closely with all of them," says Barone. "We have received positive feedback, and everyone has been supportive and helpful."

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.