

## Immediate Release

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## CHRISTIANA CARE HEALTH SYSTEM AND THE CINDY FOUNDATION PROVIDE A FINANCIAL SAFETY NET FOR CANCER PATIENTS

(WILMINGTON, Del.—May 18) The Cindy Foundation has made a \$15,500 gift to Christiana Care Health System to support the Cancer Special Needs Fund at the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute. The Fund provides patients with financial assistance for medical and related expenses not covered by health care insurance.

“Cancer’s toll on families is not only physical and emotional, it’s also often financial,” said Nicholas J. Petrelli, M.D., FACS, Bank of America endowed medical director of the Graham Cancer Center. “The health system’s mission is to serve our community and to take care of the people we serve. At the Graham Cancer Center, we provide excellent clinical care and supportive services, and we connect patients with resources like our Special Needs Fund to ease the financial burden of cancer. The Cindy Foundation’s generous support enables us to help more patients during the most challenging time of their lives.”

Founded in 2009, the Delaware-based Cindy Foundation honors the life and memory of Cynthia “Cindy” DiPinto, a Delawarean who died of ovarian cancer at age 43. In the past seven years the non-profit has supported efforts in awareness, education and research. Christiana Care is one of its major recipients.

“Since we started, the Foundation has donated a total of \$76,750 to the Graham Cancer Center’s Special Needs Fund,” said Delaware State Representative Helene F. Keeley, a Foundation founder and longtime friend of its namesake. “The health system is a major partner in the Foundation’s cancer fighting efforts. It means a great deal to us that we can help this world class provider offer a financial safety net for patients who might otherwise forgo care or incur debt while dealing with cancer.”

Cancer is one of the most expensive diseases for adults, according to recent research from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. After a diagnosis, patients frequently face unexpected out-of-pocket expenses that insurance does not cover, an extra output that can cause financial setbacks for families on limited incomes. In some instances, the impact on their financial health is long-term. A just published *Health Affairs* study finds that working-age cancer survivors or a member of their families often go into debt to pay for care, some even declaring bankruptcy.

Christiana Care launched the Cancer Special Needs Fund in 1999. Made possible through corporate, foundation and private donor support, this resource has provided more than 2,100 cancer patients with funds for assistance with discharge medications, transportation to and from appointments,

bone marrow testing for potential marrow donors, dental care for patients with head and neck cancer and other unforeseen costs.

“Cindy was a dear friend, amazing person and fierce advocate for better cancer care, awareness and research,” said Kim Gomes, a political consultant for the Byrd Group, LLC, who helped start the Foundation. “This gift to Christiana Care is a way for everyone who loved her to keep her memory alive while also helping others battle this devastating disease.”

### **About Christiana Care Health System**

Christiana Care Health System is one of the country’s largest health care systems, ranking as the 22nd leading hospital in the nation and 12th on the East Coast in terms of admissions. The health system includes The Medical Group of Christiana Care, a network of primary care physicians, medical and surgical specialists as well as home health care, preventive medicine, rehabilitation services and patient/family advisors for core health care services. A not-for-profit teaching hospital affiliated with Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University, Christiana Care is recognized as a regional center for excellence in cardiology, cancer and women's health services. Christiana Care has an extensive range of outpatient services, and through Christiana Care Quality Partners, Christiana Care works closely with its medical staff to achieve better health, better access to care and lower cost. Christiana Care is home to Delaware's only Level I trauma center, the highest capability center and the only one of its kind between Philadelphia and Baltimore. Christiana Care features a Level III neonatal intensive care unit, the only delivering hospital in Delaware that offers this highest level of care to the most critically ill newborns. Christiana Care includes two hospitals with 1,100 patient beds. For more information about Christiana Care, visit [www.christianacare.org/whoweare](http://www.christianacare.org/whoweare).



In the photo from left to right are: Jim DiPinto, Cindy DiPinto's husband and a Foundation founder; Delaware Rep. Helene F. Keeley, a Foundation founder and friend; Nicholas J. Petrelli, M.D., FACS, Bank of America endowed medical director of the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute; Tammy Brown, clinical director of cancer care management, Graham Cancer Center; Wilmington City Council Member Bud Freel, a Foundation founder and friend; Kim Gomes, a political consultant for the Byrd Group, LLC, a Foundation founder and friend.

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