



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Couples committed to cancer prevention Husband & wife teams hope to help future generations**

Wilmington, DE (January 21, 2004) – Don and Lindy Ehart personally understand the benefits to be gained from cancer research. At age 19, their daughter Terry was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s disease. She was treated with an experimental combination of drugs that were shown in trials to offer better results than one drug alone. “My daughter is alive today because of the research and testing done on the drugs used in her treatment,” says Don. The Eharts are now committed to furthering research to prevent cancer and have enrolled in clinical research trials through the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center’s Clinical Trials Office. Lindy is enrolled in the STAR trial, a study on how to prevent breast cancer, while Don has volunteered for the SELECT trial, a study on how to prevent prostate cancer.

“It is rare to see couples participate simultaneously in studies,” says Clare Wilson, RN, MS, cancer prevention nurse at the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center. “Even more unusual is the fact that at Christiana Care we have not one couple, but two.” Sandra Barsczeski enrolled in STAR at her doctor’s suggestion, after a breast biopsy revealed an abnormal result. “I’m doing this for me,” she says. “But I like the idea that others will benefit, too.” Her husband Peter agrees. He volunteered for the SELECT trial after the couple’s initial meeting with Pam Eppes, RN, at the cancer center. “I heard about SELECT when my wife and I went to learn about the STAR trial,” says Peter. “For me, the biggest benefit was the annual checkup and blood work. If I do develop a problem, it will be caught earlier because I’m watched so closely.”

Trial participants take a regimen of pills each day as determined by the study. They undergo periodic physical exams, blood work and X-rays, and are followed closely by their physicians and the cancer center’s research staff. In blinded studies such as STAR and SELECT, neither the individual nor the doctors and researchers know which regimen the person is taking. While there may be more than one reason to join a research trial, both couples agree there is no reason not to. “People shouldn’t be afraid to participate in a research study,” says Lindy Ehart. “If anything, we get better health care because we’re involved.” To learn more about participating in a cancer prevention trial, call 623-4590.

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.