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**Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center and  
Beebe Medical Center's Tunnell Cancer Center  
affiliate to improve cancer care statewide**

WILMINGTON, DE (Sept 8, 2003) Cancer specialists at Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center in New Castle County and Beebe Medical Center's Tunnell Cancer Center in Sussex County have created a new affiliation to help improve clinical care for cancer patients statewide. As part of the agreement, the two are now sharing advanced technology and expertise, such as a combined surgical/chemotherapy procedure that can improve survival rates for people with advanced abdominal cancer; and advanced capabilities in genetic counseling and testing.

James E. Spellman, M.D., FACS, FSSO, a surgical oncologist from Beebe Medical Center's multidisciplinary cancer team, is Beebe's physician liaison to the clinical affiliation. Dr. Spellman, along with Beebe medical oncologists Srihari Peri, M.D. and Pramod Vadlamani, M.D., and obstetrician/gynecologist Steven D. Berlin, M.D., have been performing a procedure known as intra-peritoneal hyperthermic perfusion (IPHP) for several months. Under this new agreement, the Beebe physicians instructed Christiana Care's team on the technique and the two cancer centers share the perfusion equipment involved.

The affiliation also includes Christiana Care sharing its advanced capabilities in genetic counseling and testing with Beebe's cancer team. Nicholas J. Petrelli, M.D., MBNA-endowed medical director of the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center, says Christiana Care and Beebe are sharing the equipment and expertise that enables doctors at both ends of the state to work together to improve clinical care for cancer patients statewide. "Part of my global vision for raising the standard of oncology care in Delaware is to bring together the highly skilled people at both institutions and develop programs together."

"We also have improved statewide communications technology through monthly video cancer conferences involving the multidisciplinary cancer teams at the Tunnell Cancer Center and Helen F. Graham Cancer Center," adds Dr. Petrelli. "This clearly shows how our respective cancer programs are working together to stay on the cutting edge of cancer care."

**New hope for those with advanced abdominal cancer**

The IPHP procedure combines surgery to remove as much tumor as possible with an immediate infusion of heated chemotherapy directly into the abdominal cavity. "There is evidence that the

heated drugs are more effective on these kinds of tumors because they are more sensitive to higher temperatures than normal tissue,” explains Stephen Grubbs, M.D., chief of Medical Oncology at Christiana Care’s Helen F. Graham Cancer Center. IPHP extends the survival rate from three to six months to an average of 16 months, while improving quality of life for many patients with advanced abdominal cancer. “The diseases we’re targeting are cancers of the colon, rectum, small bowel, appendix and ovaries that have spread to the abdominal cavity lining, also referred to as the peritoneum,” says Dr. Grubbs.

“What was deemed inoperable cancer is now being attacked very aggressively, with clinical benefit to extend the duration and quality of our patients’ lives,” comments Dr. Spellman. “This is excellent progress.”

“IPHP benefits those who previously had only intravenous chemotherapy as an option,” adds Rafaat Abdel-Misih, M.D., vice chairman of Christiana Care’s Department of Surgery and one of the surgeons who now performs the surgical part of the treatment in the northern part of the state.

### **Genetic counseling and testing now available statewide**

Christiana Care introduced adult genetic counseling and testing to Delaware last year when it hired the state’s first genetic counselor for adults, Zohra Ali-Khan Catts, MS, CGC. Catts meets regularly with families at high risk for cancer, including individuals with a family history of breast and colorectal cancers, teaches them about risk factors and, when appropriate, makes recommendations for genetic testing for certain gene mutations. Now, with the new affiliation between the two cancer centers, Ali-Khan Catts visits Beebe’s Tunnell Cancer Center monthly to interview individuals there, saving Sussex County residents a trip to the northern end of the state for genetic counseling.

### **New York colleagues reunite in Delaware**

The Christiana Care and Beebe affiliation reunites Drs. Petrelli and Spellman, both surgical oncologists who previously worked together at Roswell Park Cancer Center in New York, and who share a common affinity for a multidisciplinary approach to cancer care, bringing a new unified force to improve cancer care to benefit residents throughout Delaware.

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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 \$42.8 million of charity care. Visit Christiana Care online at [www.christianacare.org](http://www.christianacare.org).

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Beebe Medical Center is a not-for-profit community medical center with a mission to encourage healthy living, prevent illness, and restore optimal health with the people residing, working, or visiting in the communities we serve. For more information, please visit us online at [www.beebemed.org](http://www.beebemed.org)