

Immediate Release

Contact:

Bill Schmitt: 302-327-3318

wschmitt@christianacare.org

**Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute
Awarded National Cancer Institute Research Grant to Transform
Community Cancer Care**

Wilmington, DE – August 18, 2014 – [Christiana Care Health System's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute](#) has earned a five-year, \$8.2 million grant from the National Cancer Institute's Community Oncology Research Program to bring leading-edge cancer screenings, prevention, control, treatment and imaging research trials to more people in places closest to where they live.

The Graham Cancer Center is one of only 34 NCORP Community Sites joined by 12 Minority/Underserved Community Sites that will implement the latest, most scientifically advanced clinical research designed and led by NCORP. These clinical trials will bring added opportunity to test new technologies and strategies to fight cancer. They will also enable research on how cancer care is delivered in today's changing health care environment, all with an eye toward improving outcomes and reducing disparities of care.

“Making quality cancer care more accessible to our patients is the hallmark of Christiana Care's cancer program and mission,” said Nicholas J. Petrelli, M.D., Bank of America endowed medical director of Christiana Care's Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute. “In partnership with NCORP, we can change the landscape of cancer care delivery in Delaware and throughout the country in similar communities, where we know 80 percent of patients receive their cancer care.”

The Graham Cancer Center is one of the original NCI-selected Community Cancer Center sites and has been a leader in NCI's Community Clinical Oncology Program. NCORP builds on and replaces these two previous NCI community-based clinical research programs that have helped drive down cancer rates. In 2002, Delaware had the highest cancer mortality in the nation. Today, the First State is number 14 on that list, and cancer mortality rates for both men and women are dropping nearly twice as fast as the national average.

Christiana Care Medical Oncologist Stephen S. Grubbs, M.D., is the NCORP principal investigator at the Graham Cancer Center. “These programs show that when local physician investigators collaborate on national community-based studies, our patients benefit greatly because they gain access to the most promising cancer fighting strategies without having to leave the comfort of familiar surroundings,” said Dr. Grubbs. “Membership in NCORP is a natural progression for our program,” he said.

A member of the Delaware Cancer Consortium, Dr. Grubbs is recognized for leading a community partnership that eliminated racial disparity in colorectal cancer between African-Americans and whites. The results of Delaware's successful colon cancer screening program are published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (April 2013).

Additionally, Dr. Grubbs has guided many NCI cooperative group trials as a principal investigator and advisor. He is a member of the board of directors of the NCI-sponsored Alliance Research Group and the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

Clinical trial enrollment at the Graham Cancer Center is already well above the national average. Twenty-one percent of cancer patients enter a research clinical trial, compared with a national average of only three to five percent.

Community cancer programs like the Graham Cancer Center offer the potential of larger, more diverse patient enrollment that makes it more feasible to test new interventions and strengthens the ability to generalize study findings to an even broader population of cancer patients. Also, when community cancer specialists participate in these studies, more effective, evidence-based strategies become part of routine cancer care.

“Christiana Care’s cancer research program is a highly respected leader in the field of NCI-sponsored research,” said Research Director Kandie Dempsey, MS, RN, OCN, who also chairs the Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology’s Clinical Research Professionals Committee. “Receiving the NCORP award is due to the impressive experience and dedication of our physicians and clinical research professional support team. Funding will allow us to look harder at the quality and value of care we provide to our community and to improve the treatment and outcomes of people with cancer.”

One of the most technologically advanced and largest cancer programs on the East Coast, the Graham Cancer Center’s world-class team of specialists provided care for more than 213,000 patient visits last year. Besides being a top enroller in U.S. clinical trials, the Graham Cancer Center is recognized as a national model for multidisciplinary cancer care. Its patient-navigation system is emulated by cancer centers across the nation, and many of its cancer care professionals lead today’s development of cancer care strategies and new clinical investigations. The Graham Cancer Center’s Center for Translational Cancer Research, Tissue Procurement Center and collaborations with world-renowned scientists at facilities such as the University of Delaware and The Wistar Institute in Philadelphia are opening new avenues to more quickly translate cancer science into cancer medicine.

About Christiana Care Health System

Christiana Care Health System is one of the country’s largest health care providers, ranking as the 21st leading hospital in the nation and 11th on the East Coast in terms of admissions. A not-for-profit teaching hospital affiliated with Thomas Jefferson Medical College, Christiana Care is recognized as a regional center for excellence in cardiology, cancer and women's health services, as well as for its Level-I trauma care and Level-3 neonatal intensive care (both highest capability). Christiana Care includes two hospitals with 1,100 patient beds, a home health care service, preventive medicine, rehabilitation services, a network of primary care physicians and an extensive range of outpatient services. For more information about Christiana Care, visit www.christianacare.org/whoweare.

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