

Immediate Release

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Christiana Care Health System opens the first epilepsy monitoring unit in Delaware serving neurologic needs of adults

Private rooms feature state of the art video and audio monitoring and stationary lift

Wilmington, DE, June 20, 2018 – To increase access to advanced neurological care, Christiana Care Health System has opened the first [Epilepsy Monitoring Unit](#) (EMU) in the First State.

Specially outfitted private hospital rooms in the Transition Neuro Unit at Christiana Hospital provide state-of-the-art equipment for video and audio monitoring. In the rooms, brain waves are tracked with electroencephalography (EEG) and electrical activity in the heart is recorded with electrocardiography (EKG), helping clinicians understand what is happening during a seizure.

To further enhance safety, nurses assist patients whenever they are out of their bed. And patients wear mobility vests that connect to a stationary lift, a system that allows patients to move around a room – and prevents them from falling if they have a seizure. This is one of the few EMUs in the U.S. that uses a patient lift to prevent falls.

Epilepsy is a central nervous system disorder, in which brain activity becomes abnormal, leading to seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations or loss of awareness. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that there are 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and there is a growing incidence of the disease among the adult population in Delaware, especially among people 60 and older.

“Our community deserves the very best in neurological care,” said Valerie Dechant, M.D., physician leader, Neuroscience Service Line, and medical director, Neurocritical Care and Acute Neurologic Services. “Our new Epilepsy Monitoring Unit will enable us to serve the complex neurologic needs of our adult patients.”

Christiana Care’s EMU is part of a larger effort to establish an epilepsy center of excellence, so adults of any age can receive the highest quality routine and specialty care for seizure disorders.

“We want to help patients who believe they have been over-diagnosed or under-diagnosed so they can see improvement in their lives,” said Neurologist John R. Pollard, M.D., medical director of the new EMU.

While most patients with epilepsy are successfully treated by a general neurologist or epileptologist, a significant number of patients have persistent fainting or seizure episodes – or they have unwanted side effects from medications. This new facility enables physicians to work

more closely with these patients to understand their seizures and determine appropriate treatment.

“Typically, these patients visit an EMU where they may stay for several days so they can be safely taken off medications, inducing seizures that are recorded and studied so a proper diagnosis and treatment can be planned,” said Christy L. Poole, RN, BSN CRNI CCRC, a neurosciences program manager.

Visiting an EMU to induce a seizure could be a source of anxiety for patients and their families.

“Our staff works with patients and families to reduce any fear by providing information on what to expect, stressing procedures that enhance patient safety and making the stay as pleasant as possible,” said Susan Craig, MSN, RNIII-BC, epilepsy clinical nurse practice coordinator.

Photo collection

<https://christianacare.imagerelay.com/sb/94d14804-3dbb-462a-b2a0-553218a6dd2d/epilepsy-monitoring-unit>

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 11th 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 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 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/howeare.