

**Immediate Release**

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## **Christiana Care Partners with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to Educate Hospitals on Project Engage**

(NEWARK, Del. – Nov. 9) Leaders with Project Engage, the exemplary early-intervention substance abuse program at [Christiana Care Health System](http://christianacare.org), will be keynote speakers for an educational webinar on Wednesday, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> to showcase how to launch sustainable peer recovery programs in health care systems and communities across the United States.

Hundreds have registered due to the high demand by stakeholders to learn about how Christiana Care's Project Engage model improves outcomes while reducing costs.

The webinar is facilitated by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the division of the federal Department of Health and Human Services charged with leading public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation.

The webinar aims to convey how an interdisciplinary team can partner to develop and run peer recovery programs that help individuals with substance use disorders connect to treatment and recover. Most importantly, successful factors for sustaining a system-wide peer program will be shared so that other hospitals and communities can better serve individuals with the chronic disease of addiction.

Through Project Engage, health care professionals known as engagement specialists, who are peers in recovery, reach patients with substance abuse problems at the hospital bedside – at the low point of their addiction – and link them to resources in the community that put them on the path to recovery.

“Even people who have struggled with addiction for years or decades have been able to overcome their dependence on drugs and achieve optimal health because of the empathy and support from their engagement specialist,” said Terry L. Horton, M.D., FACP, chief of the Division of Addiction Medicine and creator of Project Engage. “We are grateful that SAMHSA recognizes Project Engage's evidence-based care and has given us the opportunity to help hospitals and communities across the country learn about this special program.”

For patients who are in the hospital because of an illness that may be completely unrelated to alcohol or drug use, Project Engage creates a unique opportunity for intervention and bolsters Christiana Care's efforts to achieve medicine's Triple Aim of improving the experience and quality of care while reducing health care costs.

Christiana Care launched Project Engage in the patient care units of Wilmington Hospital in 2008.

Since then, Christiana Care has expanded Project Engage to:

- Christiana Hospital's patient care units.
- Christiana Hospital's emergency department.
- Wilmington Hospital's emergency department.
- Christiana Care's primary care practices.
- Christiana Care's Women's and Children's Services.
- Community programs.

More than 5,000 patients have been helped through Project Engage, and research shows that individuals who have worked with a peer in recovery are significantly less likely to require readmission to the hospital. The average annual savings when engagement specialists have intervened are approximately \$6,000 per patient. The program is carried out through a partnership between Christiana Care and Brandywine Counseling and Community Services, a nonprofit that provides substance abuse and mental health services.

"The first step in treating any disease is to engage the patient in treatment," said Rita Landgraf, Cabinet Secretary for the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. "For people impacted by addiction, Project Engage shows how important it is to involve people with shared life experiences in order to gain their trust and support them as they begin their treatment. Peers offer that living proof that treatment does work and people do live in long-term recovery."

The webinar, "How to Implement a Sustainable Peer Program Into Your Health System" – scheduled for 1 p.m. EST Wednesday – will be moderated by SAMHSA Region III Regional Administrator Jean Bennett, Ph.D., RN, along with Project Engage speakers Mark DeWitt Lanyon, Ph.D., ICADC, ICCDPD, LCDP, LPC, clinical program manager for Project Engage and engagement specialist Peter Booras.

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

Christiana Care Health System is one of the country's largest health care systems, ranking as the 21st leading hospital in the nation and 10th 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).

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