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For Immediate Release

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MARYLAND ICU PATIENTS CONNECTED TO REMOTE CRITICAL CARE STAFF, IMPROVING QUALITY AND SAFETY
The First Maryland eCare Hospital goes "live"

WASHINGTON DC – Starting Monday, May 18, Maryland intensive care patients will be connected by voice, video and data lines to specialized physicians and nurses at a tertiary care referral center 130 miles away. A year after announcing six, independent Maryland hospitals, with a \$3 million grant from CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, were joining together to provide state-of-the-art critical care to their patients, the first hospital, Calvert Memorial Hospital in Prince Frederick, Md., is fully online with the sophisticated care system.

"We are thrilled to bring rural Maryland patients this enhanced level of care," said Dr. Thomas Lawrence, Board Chair of Maryland eCare and Chief Medical Officer for Peninsula Regional Medical Center, an eCare member. "This is an exciting step towards improving the already high quality of care for all Marylanders."

Studies have shown improved patient outcomes and decreased lengths of stay for patients in intensive care units (ICU) managed by physicians who specialize in critical care. Yet, due to a current shortage in the specialty, it's difficult for many hospitals to keep these physicians on-site 24 hours a day. eCare virtually connects physicians, nurses and patients via voice, camera and data, enabling hospitals to provide the highest level of specialized care around the clock. Calvert Memorial will work most closely with eCare on nights, weekends and holidays, times typically difficult for local specialists to remain on-site.

Working with a remote monitoring center at Christiana Care in Wilmington, Del., eCare supplements local ICU staff with experienced critical care physicians and nurses. Christiana Care was the first health system in the country to adopt the eICU® Program to monitor critically ill patients in its emergency departments and post-anesthesia care units and currently uses the technology in four of its ICUs.

With eCare, patients benefit from receiving timely, critical care when they need it and where they are most comfortable – close to home. Moment-by-moment monitoring quickly detects changes in patient condition, watching trends in crucial

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indicators such as blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen levels and respiratory rates, allowing remote staff to alert and work cohesively with on-site staff to improve patient status.

eCare does not take the place of bedside staff. It provides an extra set of eyes and ears ensuring an added layer of safety and enabling a patient's care plan to prevent a medical crisis instead of responding to one. For on-site caregivers, in-room help is available at the push of a button.

Since the 2008 Maryland eCare announcement, eCare hospitals have been coordinating staff, securing data lines and working closely with the team at Christiana Care to ready their facilities for seamless inclusion of remote monitoring. Calvert is the first hospital to come online. Later this year, Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury and St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown will also come online. By 2011, almost 80 ICU beds will be connected through Maryland eCare.

eICU® is a registered trademark of Philips-VISICU, Inc.

About Maryland eCare

Maryland eCare, LLC is a group of independent hospitals committed to improving patient care and safety for the communities they serve by sharing resources and bringing skilled critical care to rural Maryland. Maryland eCare hospitals include: Atlantic General Hospital, Berlin; Calvert Memorial Hospital, Prince Frederick; Civista Medical Center, La Plata; Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Salisbury; St. Mary's Hospital, Leonardtown; and Washington County Health System, Hagerstown. For more information, visit www.marylandecare.org.

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