



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Making the Memories Last

(MEADOWBROOK, PA) – This holiday season, while most are wishing for that DVD or MP3 player, bicycle, or cashmere sweater, some are just hoping that their loved one can remember their name or recognize their face. These are just some of the troubles people face when their family member or friend is afflicted with dementia.

Dementia refers to a group of memory, personality, and behavior problems caused by changes in the brain. Although there are many different types of dementia, the most common are vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease. As many as 5.2 million people in the United States are living with Alzheimer's.

Barry Fabius, M.D., vice president and medical director for geriatrics at Holy Redeemer Health System, advises that your loved one should get screened for a positive diagnosis before initiating a care plan.

Says Dr. Fabius: "Ways to arrive at a diagnosis include a thorough review of dementia's symptoms which are memory disturbance and problems with language, reasoning, and personality. Should your loved one test positive for these characteristics, the next step is an MRI or CT scan offered on Holy Redeemer's campus. In some cases, PET scans can be helpful for further clarification in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease."

MRI, CT, or PET scans are noninvasive, advanced diagnostic imaging procedures that can provide unique information to aid in the differential diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease versus other forms of dementia. These scans can reveal biological changes within the brain attributable to Alzheimer's disease and assist in the diagnosis.

There are ways to make the memories last. Treatment, which differs depending on the type of dementia, is not a cure; rather, it slows the process and dementia's symptoms. Those with Alzheimer's and vascular dementia are treated similarly.

Says Dr. Fabius: "Along with offering medication, I strongly advise that patients with dementia incorporate 30 minutes each of physical, cognitive, and social activity to their

daily schedules. I have found that those who stick to this regimen can slow the process for up to twenty years, depending on the illness' stage.”

Dementia can take a toll on both you and your loved one, who is dealing with the disease. However, you are not alone. Dr. Fabius suggests alternative options for care. These include:

- **Holy Redeemer Home Care:** A special program called LifeAssess can help your loved one stay at home while getting the care they need. Using LifeAssess, nurses work with families to create routines that prevent confusion; reduce the risk of injury; and contain wandering.

- **Assisted living:** St. Joseph's Manor also offers assisted living units, which provide structured, interactive, and supportive environments beneficial to those with mild dementia.

- **Alzheimer's caregiver support groups:** Share your experiences and listen to others. Support groups are available every fourth Wednesday of the month at St. Joseph's Manor and every first Friday at The Lafayette-Redeemer on Verree Road in Philadelphia. For more information, call 1-800-818-4747.

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