

To inspire generous charitable giving that strengthens and sustains excellent healthcare through the AnMed Health System.

AnMed Health Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that provides fundraising support for community programs and initiatives at AnMed Health. The Foundation welcomes donations from individuals, families and corporations to further our mission and to ensure that AnMed Health can continue to provide services that improve the health and lives of the people in our community.

## Now & Then

# 2001: The Year of the Heart

By John A. Miller, Jr.  
President Emeritus, AnMed Health

**In the English language**, “heart” has at least 14 definitions, including “the ability to feel humane and altruistic feelings” and “the capacity for courage and determination.”

At AnMed Health, 2001 became the Year of the Heart, in more ways than one.

Although AnMed Health had been offering cardiac catheterization – a diagnostic procedure in which dye is injected through a catheter into the coronary arteries, and x-rays of the dye-filled vessels are used to detect blockages – since 1989, patients who needed cardiac surgery had to travel elsewhere.

Each year, about eight hundred Anderson-area residents were making the trip to larger cities, usually Atlanta, for surgical procedures to keep their hearts

pumping regularly. Out-of-town surgery was a major ordeal for patients and their families, not only because of the trauma of the procedure itself but also because of the time, expense and stress of traveling and staying away from home.

Since the late 1990s, executive and medical staff leadership at AnMed Health had been carefully evaluating whether to start our own Heart Care program. With the primary objective of making sure these very high-risk surgeries could be performed at AnMed Health safely and with excellent outcomes, the health system retained two consultant groups with proven expertise to help develop the program.

On the morning of June 11, 2001, the first patient was wheeled into an operating room at the downtown medical center campus for repair of a one-inch hole between the heart’s top two chambers, a



defect that had probably been present since birth. Over the next two weeks, Drs. Scott Kabas and Barry Davis performed 10 more procedures, including atrial septal defect repairs and bypass and valve surgeries.

All of the patients had excellent outcomes and significant improvements in quality of life.

Later that month, the Heart Care program began offering a non-surgical procedure,

CONTINUED INSIDE ON PAGE 3

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# HealthImpacts

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANMED HEALTH FOUNDATION WINTER 2017

## What's Inside

**1/ Heart of the Matter**  
One of the best tools for managing CHF patients' care

**3/Greetings from the AnMed Health Foundation**  
Appreciation comes full circle

**3/ Tribute Giving**  
It's the thought that counts

**4/ Now & Then**  
2001: The Year of the Heart

## The heart of the matter: for CHF patients, weight is not a game

**For most of us**, waking up to discover a few extra pounds showing on the scale is just a signal to hit the gym, grab a salad for lunch, and skip the fries and/or dessert with dinner. But for the roughly 6 million Americans who suffer from congestive heart failure (CHF), higher numbers on the scale send a more alarming signal – and one that can't be quite so easily addressed.

That's because for CHF patients, the increase is unlikely to be weight gain. Instead, it's an indicator that the patient is retaining water – excess fluid that builds up in the body's organs and tissues, including the brain, lungs and kidneys, starving them of vital oxygen and nutrients and sometimes (but not always) resulting in symptoms like:

- shortness of breath
- feeling tired and weak
- swelling, especially in legs, ankles and feet
- rapid or irregular heartbeat.

There is no cure for congestive heart failure, but tools and treatments can help slow its progress and reduce its symptoms. One of the most important therapeutic tools is the simple bathroom scale.

By weighing each morning, patients are able to detect and monitor the amount of fluid they are retaining. A gain of three pounds or more is an alert to contact their family physician, cardiologist or the CHF Clinic so the patient care team can take corrective action quickly.

Getting these life-saving scales into the hands and homes of CHF patients is not as easy as it sounds. Overwhelmed by a CHF diagnosis and its immediate to-do list (schedule tests and appointments, fill prescriptions for expensive medications, shop for low-salt foods, change the recipes you cook and the foods you eat...), patients can lack the time, energy and money to shop for scales.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Now, thanks to ongoing funding from the AnMed Health Foundation, the CHF clinic is able to buy Extra Wide Talking Scales at a discounted price and keep them on hand for newly diagnosed patients. With an extra-wide platform, easy-to-read display, 550-pound capacity and clear, easy-to-hear voice, these digital scales provide a stable, accurate way to measure and record the patient's weight data.

At roughly \$30 each, it's a small price to pay to slow the progress of this life-threatening disease.



When you weigh the costs and benefits, it's obvious that this is one of the best tools we have for managing CHF patients' health.

Pam Eckstein, BSN, RN  
Patient Navigator  
CHF Clinic / Heart and Vascular Care

## What is CHF?

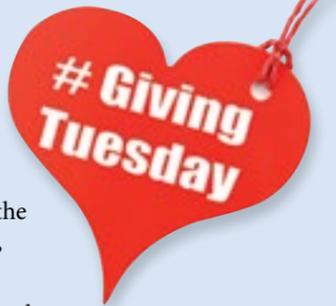
Congestive heart failure does not mean that the heart has stopped working. It means that the heart is weaker than normal and does not pump blood as efficiently as it should. As it works harder to move more blood, the heart's chambers may stretch, stiffen, or thicken. Eventually this strain damages the heart muscle even more, causing blood and fluid to build up in the lungs, feet, ankles and legs.

CHF affects nearly 6 million Americans and is the leading cause of hospitalization in people 65 and older. The earlier CHF is diagnosed, the better its symptoms can be managed.

## Greetings from the AnMed Health Foundation

What's the best way to honor people whose considerate actions and positive attitudes brighten your day? At AnMed Health, where we see so many inspirational acts of kindness and caring daily, the appreciation we feel too often goes without saying. That's why I'd like to introduce you to a thoughtful, yet tangible, way to pay your respects to those you appreciate:

## Tribute Giving



Honestly, I'd always known tribute giving as a good way to memorialize a loved one's passing, but when the Foundation recently participated in #GivingTuesday, I gained a much broader perspective. Here's why:

My wife Rita suggested that we make our #GivingTuesday gifts in honor of people at AnMed Health who we felt demonstrated "the art of caring." Our list was diverse, with folks from food service, nursing, support staff, volunteers and more. Working my volunteer shift at the #GivingTuesday table, I passed along our list and a check to the Foundation and thought no more about it.

Within a few days, Rita and I started getting notes thanking us for the gifts! Most were shared on social media, but one was a handwritten note mailed to our home. Obviously, the card had been carefully selected, with a verse that read, "See the good in people, live your dreams, live well, laugh often and love much. Friendship isn't one big thing, it is a million little things!"

The message inside read, "It was such an honor to receive a note from the Foundation letting me know a gift was given in honor of me. That is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for me. I enjoy your positive energy and the blessing you give to so many people from your family, the community, our patients and their families. Thank you for this blessing to me!"

This touching note truly redefined the value of making a tribute gift. It demonstrates that we appreciate the difference you make every day in your work so much that we are giving to an organization whose mission supports your work. It's a perfect way to express a heartfelt thank you.

I encourage you to consider a tribute gift to AnMed Health Foundation any time the opportunity arises. As Rita and I discovered, it's an honor to both share and receive its blessings.



Hughlyn H. Burgess  
Chairman, Board of Trustees  
AnMed Health Foundation



**Tribute gifts are tax deductible and may be made to the AnMed Health Foundation in general or designated to a particular department, program or division. Gifts may be made online at [anmedhealthfoundation.org](http://anmedhealthfoundation.org) or by calling the Foundation office at 864.512.3477.**

# Tribute Giving: It's the thought that counts

Sure, most of us like to give and receive gifts. We all try to give – and hope to receive – gifts that are thoughtfully chosen, beautifully presented, and well received. That's why we work so hard to find just the right thing for every gift-giving occasion. Our goal is more than simply to give a material gift. We want each gift to be special, to express the sentiment that prompted the gift, and to touch the heart of the recipient. As the great American essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

**Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself.**

In other words, it's not the money; it's the meaning. That's the thought behind a growing trend called tribute giving. Making a donation to a nonprofit organization is a foolproof way to honor a person, program or occasion in a meaningful way. Tribute gifts allow you to give in innovative, unexpected ways that communicate your common values. Even small gifts have important, long-lasting significance.

**Here are just a few recent tribute gifts given to the AnMed Health Foundation:**

- For her sweet sixteenth birthday, a developmentally challenged teenager invited her guests to make designated gifts to the AnMed Health Foundation in support of the AnMed Health Pediatric Therapy Works program. Seeing how much the years of speech, physical and occupational therapies had improved her life, her family and friends gave nearly \$600 to help Pediatric Therapy Works replace some of the program's most-used therapeutic gear and specialized supplies.
- Grateful for his own ongoing recovery, an active participant in AnMed Health's LifeChoice cardiac rehab program has found a way to pay it forward: For more than two decades, he's been making periodic tribute gifts to the Foundation in recognition of people and programs he cares



about, including Freedom Link, the 24/7 medical alert and medication management system; the CHF Clinic; and the new Mobile Diagnostic Unit. Dozens of friends, family, colleagues, the pastor at his church, and even some hospital staff have been surprised and delighted to be honored in such a personal and meaningful way.

- When a much-loved Anderson resident lost his valiant battle with a long illness, his family chose to "thank the nurses of AnMed Health's ICU and 7 South for their compassionate and excellent care," by establishing a nursing palliative care education fund in his name. Because AnMed Health's supportive care program is relatively new, the generous memorial gifts given by his patients, family and friends are helping to provide the specialized training that caregivers need to prevent and ease the suffering of patients with serious illnesses. To date, the fund totals more than \$6,500.

Regardless of your budget, a tribute gift is an outstanding alternative for any gift-giving occasion: To celebrate a birth; commemorate an anniversary or special event; acknowledge a kindness; honor a true friend or esteemed colleague; show appreciation for a favorite teacher, pastor or community leader; or pay respect to the memory of a loved one. Some couples are even choosing to create a wedding registry made up of nonprofit organizations rather than traditional household goods and luxuries.

Any time you would normally give a gift, would you consider a tribute gift to the AnMed Health Foundation instead? It would be an honor to help you put your thoughts into action.

known as balloon angioplasty or percutaneous coronary intervention, to open narrowed or blocked blood vessels in the heart. Within another two months, all-digital cardiovascular x-ray imaging technology was added to one of the medical center's three cardiac cath labs, providing much sharper images that greatly enhanced cardiologists' ability to diagnose heart problems. It also dramatically reduced the amount of radiation to which the patient, physician, and staff were exposed. AnMed Health was the first health system in the state to use this new technology.

AnMed Health patients soon had local access to two new pacemaker technologies, including the world's smallest pacemaker at that time. Pacemakers are implanted devices that deliver electrical impulses that help stabilize the heart rate. Both types are used to regulate the heart's normal rhythm muscles, but the small unit – at about the size of a quarter, it's roughly half the size of the standard pacemaker – is a better fit for petite or thin patients.

From its outset, AnMed Health's cardiac surgery program has produced excellent outcomes and, today, it still does, with more than 3,500 patients who have benefitted from heart surgery, plus many more from the use of advanced cardiac technologies. Careful thought and study went into the development of the Heart Care program, led by a team of visionaries acting with "humane and altruistic feelings" and "courage and determination."

That's why people in Anderson-area communities can take heart, knowing they can get the cardiac care they need without leaving town.



**AnMed Health Heart and Vascular Center has some of the best cardiac surgery outcomes in the Southeast.**