

Now & Then

The drive to save lives: healthcare hits the highway.

By John A. Miller, Jr.
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The long-awaited AnMed Health mobile diagnostic unit, recently dubbed the “Mammo Coach,” is now on the road, screening women for breast cancer and taking high quality healthcare services directly into the neighborhoods where women live and work. While mobile mammography is a new service for AnMed Health, putting services on wheels is not a new thing. In fact, providing mobile services of all kinds goes way back.

One of the best examples of early mobile services is the bookmobile. By the mid-1800s, there were reports of a “perambulating library” in England, a horse-drawn cart that was used to make books available to a wider audience. South

Carolina was a leader in bookmobile service in the United States, employing a mule-drawn wagon to providing mobile library services to rural areas of Chester County in 1904.

No, the idea of mobilizing services is not new, nor is taking healthcare on the road a new concept for AnMed Health.

With the help of a local donor, the hospital acquired its first “bloodmobile” in the late 70s, although it was basically a van that was used to transport lounge chairs and other blood collection equipment to a collection location, such as a gymnasium or large room with enough space to set up the equipment and accommodate blood donors.

By 1993, again with the help of local philanthropists, AnMed Health purchased



a self-contained mobile blood-collection unit, a large vehicle that bore a striking resemblance to a bus. In 2003, a second mobile unit was added, a specially equipped 36-foot vehicle that served as a major component of the hospital-based blood donor center and travelled regularly

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Your gift to the AnMed Health Foundation – in any amount – makes life-saving mammograms available to all women throughout our community.

Health Impacts

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANMED HEALTH FOUNDATION FALL 2017

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What's the price of saving a life?

If you could save a life by spending 45 cents a day, would you?

If you discovered that less than \$3 a week could pay for sophisticated cancer screening services throughout our local community, would you feel compelled to give?

If \$14 a month could finance tools to detect early-stage breast cancer – when it's most treatable and outcomes are more successful – would you be willing to make the investment?

In Anderson and surrounding Upstate communities, these are not just hypothetical math questions, and your answers are more important than you know. That's because \$163 – which breaks down to roughly 45 cents a day, \$3 a week or \$14 per month – is the cost of providing a digital screening mammogram on AnMed Health's Mobile Mammography Coach. And since it began seeing patients in late July, the 43-foot mobile unit is burning rubber toward its immediate goal of screening 20 patients each day.

- For a woman who can't afford to take time off work,
- who works shifts or inflexible, unpredictable service-industry hours,
- who doesn't have access to childcare, or who lacks reliable transportation,

access to mobile mammography screening can be, literally, a lifesaver.

But time, money and transportation aren't the only reasons women are hesitant to schedule mammograms at a brick-and-mortar medical facility, says Kim Stevens, radiology manager at AnMed Health. “We see women who are intimidated by hospitals or whose cultural or social values make them anxious about the procedure itself,” she explains. “For them, the opportunity to have their preventive screening done in a familiar location, alongside a group of friends or coworkers or members of their faith community, is just more comforting, which makes it more appealing.” For non-English speakers, the staff can arrange translation

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services, as well as sign language interpreters for hearing-impaired patients.

Stevens also emphasizes that mobile mammograms are not bargain-basement substitutes for traditional in-hospital screenings. "Screenings on the Mobile Mammography Coach use the same top-notch digital imaging equipment as our North Campus facility," she says, "and all services are delivered with the same level of care and expertise regardless of location."

Using a secure network and advanced image-sharing technologies, the breast images are sent in real time to AnMed Health radiologists for immediate review. "We had one instance," says Stevens, "where the radiologist read and responded to a patient's mammogram before she even got off the Coach."

While many of these mobile screenings are covered by insurance, Medicare or Medicaid, quite a few are not, and grants and subsidies are available for those who are uninsured or unable to pay.

Of course, the costs of mammography equipment, supplies and services are not the only expenses involved in



All mammography services are delivered with the same level of care and expertise regardless of location.



Cathy White, Anna Barnette and Rebecca Watt

to churches, businesses and other locations in South Carolina and Georgia.

For nearly 90 years, AnMed Health had provided the bulk of patient care at 800 North Fant Street, but by the mid-1990s, the Board of Trustees was increasingly coming to recognize the need to break down barriers by taking healthcare into the community.

Why? In part, the goal was to help people recognize and overcome health problems in their earliest stages, before they required treatment in the emergency department or admission to the hospital. Perhaps more important was helping people understand that negative lifestyle habits are killers.

In support of that effort, donors helped finance the purchase of a 34-foot vehicle designed to take medical and health services on the road to local citizens. The AnMed Health Resources Van rolled out of the medical center for the first time in early 1995. The Resources Van, also known as the Outreach Van, provided health information and free or low-cost health screenings to all area residents, with a special focus on those who were medically underserved and economically disadvantaged.

Fast forward to 2017. On July 17, the first mammogram was performed on the Mammo Coach, a state-of-the-art vehicle purchased through a communitywide fundraising campaign that demonstrated strong support for detecting and defeating breast cancer in women in the Anderson area. Currently, one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and approximately 17% of them will not survive. The goal of the AnMed Health Mammo Coach is to bring diagnostic screenings to 10,000 women a year and to **save or prolong 100 lives** through early detection, education, and access to cancer specialists.

The many generous donors who helped make AnMed Health's Mammo Coach a reality can be proud of the important difference they are making.



On July 17, the first mammogram was performed on the Mobile Mammography Coach.

operating the Coach. Factor in the costs of staffing drivers and technicians, fueling, maintaining and insuring the vehicle, and conducting outreach and scheduling activities, and the total annual operating cost comes to approximately \$320,000.

That's why the AnMed Health Foundation is working to raise \$320,000 per year for the next five years, specifically to fund

operating the Coach. At the same time, the Foundation is reaching out to partner with area corporations, businesses and organizations to help fund and schedule mobile mammography visits.

Your gift to the AnMed Health Foundation – in any amount – makes life-saving mammograms available to all women throughout our community.

Let's make a date: Why not host mobile mammography at your site?

For fast, convenient access, you can schedule an on-site visit at your church, school, business, organization or other destination at just about any time, even after hours or on weekends. To reserve a date, call 864.512.2255 or visit anmedhealth.org/pink.



To learn more about the Coach, like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/AnMedHealthFoundation/

Greetings from the AnMed Health Foundation

Let's face it, we're all busy, and most of us need a gentle nudge to take care of all those inconvenient things we know we should schedule but have a hard time getting around to: changing the oil in the car, taking the dog to the vet, replacing the furnace filters, balancing the checkbook... While I'm not suggesting those chores are unimportant, putting any of them off a bit longer isn't likely to have much effect on our health or longevity.

Breast cancer screening is different.

The American Cancer Society recommends that women age 40 and older undergo regular screening mammography for the early detection of breast cancer. The stakes are high: In the US, nearly one in eight women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime; breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women; and it is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in

women. In South Carolina, the incidence of breast cancer is higher than in the US overall, yet the percentage of women who have regular screening mammograms is much lower.

In men, breast cancer is rare but not unheard of, especially between ages 60 and 70. The American Cancer Society estimates that nearly 2,500 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in men in 2017. In 2015, six men were treated for breast cancer at AnMed Health.

Early detection is the key to survival. So why don't more people schedule regular mammograms?

Lack of time: In our area, more than half of females older than 16 are in the labor force, and many of them commute to or from other cities and communities. Many work in manufacturing, retail, hospitality and food service, and health and social assistance, jobs that tend not to have the most flexible schedules. Roughly one-third of local families include children under the age of 18.



Lack of money: The average salary for a woman working full time in our area is just \$36,474. In Anderson County, the largest group living in poverty is women 25-34, followed by women 45-54, and then



women 35-44. In South Carolina, 21% of women age 18 to 44 are not covered by private or public health insurance.

Lack of transportation: For women who don't drive or have access to reliable transportation, the options for getting to a screening facility often come down to walking long distances, maneuvering complex bus routes, paying for a taxi, or trying to catch a ride with someone, any of which just compounds her time and money issues.



That's why mobile mammography is so important.

AnMed Health Foundation was able to purchase the Mobile Mammography

Coach because of generous gifts from individuals, organizations, faith communities, corporations and grant-making sources, and we're counting on your continuing support to help us fund its ongoing operation. We can't afford to delay. It's time to make sure life-saving screening mammograms are available to anyone who needs them, anywhere in our community.



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