



2019  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



## 2019 DATA

### Total Economic Impact: \$363,867,713

Emergency Room Visits	38,510
Inpatient Admissions	11,090
Babies Born	1,092
Surgical Cases Performed	10,021
Outpatient Registrations	163,457
Clinic Visits	69,029
Days of Care Provided to Inpatients	53,787
Charges Forgone to Provide Charity Care	\$17,065,429
Paid FT and PT Employees	1,458
Salaries, Wages, and Benefits	\$84,788,341

The photos on the cover and the one above are from a film called "The Beauty of Community Health Care." View it by going to our website, [AndersonRegional.org](http://AndersonRegional.org).

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### ***Our Mission***

To continue our heritage of healing and improving life for the people we serve.

### ***Our Vision***

To be the healthcare provider of choice.

### ***Our Values***

We recognize: Respect, Trust, Dignity, Responsiveness



# COMMUNITY



Jeannie's Place at Planet Playground, Meridian's first fully inclusive playground (inspired by Jeannie Null), was built by hundreds of volunteers in 2019. This remarkable playground includes a swing for wheelchair users and a stainless-steel slide that children with cochlear implants can whisk down without worrying about static. Volunteers from Anderson were part of the effort, with staff from WorkHealth taking care of the first aid tent and others helping with the actual build. From left are: Waylon Temple, Walter McLelland, Johnny Sowers and Daricek Shelby.



# MATTERS



he beauty of working in community healthcare is that wherever I go, I invariably run into people who want to tell me about their experience at one of our facilities. These welcomed encounters give me the opportunity to come back and effect positive change and improvement in our organization.

When my grandfather, Dr. Jeff Anderson, founded Anderson Infirmary 92 years ago, he envisioned an advanced, local medical facility where everyone could receive the best possible care close to home. Building on his strong heritage, Anderson Regional Health System now serves as a destination point for trauma, surgical, obstetric, pediatric, cancer and cardiac care. We continue to provide services for the sick and give hope to all who cross our thresholds, just as we did back in 1928.

With this long legacy of improving life for the people we serve, our mission now extends beyond the walls of our many care facilities. As a regional health system, we have a responsibility to give back to our larger, regional community. Our administration, medical staff and employees understand and embrace this responsibility.

I am a strong believer in leadership, stewardship and working towards a common goal to advance the growth and quality of life for our area. In this report, you will see examples of how believing in what matters to our community leads to success — for corporations, small businesses, schools, families and individuals as well.

*John G. Anderson, FACHE  
President and CEO*





## Board of Directors



*Joseph M.S. Anderson, D.Min.  
Chairman*



*Dr. Shawn Anderson*



*Jan Farrington*



*Gay Hill*



*Dr. John Clay*



*Bill Crawford*



*Thad Quarles*



*David Vowell*

## 2019 Medical Staff Officers



**Dr. Jennifer Rodriguez**  
*Chief of Staff*



**Dr. John Blackwell**  
*Past Chief of Staff*



**Dr. William Billups III**  
*Vice Chief of Staff*



**Dr. Muzaffar Rahat**  
*Secretary*



**Dr. Daniel McKiever**  
*Chief of Surgery*



**Dr. Hatem Mourad**  
*Chief of Medicine*

## Executive Team



**Dr. Keith Everett**  
*Chief Medical Officer*



**Steven Brown**  
*Chief Financial Officer*



**Betty Cryer, RN, MSN**  
*Chief Nursing Officer*

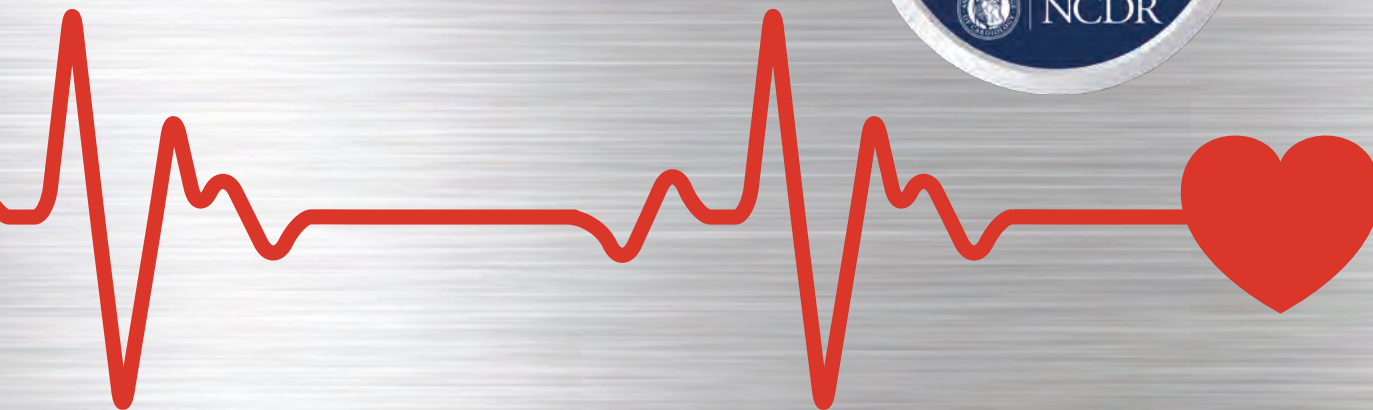


**Wanda Cooper**  
*Vice President  
of Professional Relations*



**Denton Farr**  
*Vice President  
of Operations*

# EXCELLENT HEALTH CARE *Matters*



**PLATINUM AWARD**



# OUTSTANDING HEART ATTACK CARE



Anderson Regional Medical Center was recognized in the 2019 edition of *U.S. News and World Report* for receiving the American College of Cardiology Platinum Performance Achievement Award. The award recognizes Anderson's success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients by meeting aggressive performance measures as outlined in the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association clinical guidelines and recommendations.

"The cardiac team at Anderson continues to set and achieve high goals that improve the outcomes of our heart attack patients and, in turn, save lives. This award, combined with being Meridian's only accredited Chest Pain Center and open heart surgery

program, demonstrates our physicians and staff have a strong commitment to provide patients with the most advanced cardiac care in this area," said John G. Anderson, President and CEO of Anderson Regional Health System.

To receive the Platinum Performance Achievement Award, the hospital must consistently treat heart attack patients according to the most current, science-based guidelines for eight consecutive quarters and meet a performance standard of 90 percent or more for specific performance measures.

Dr. Wes Bennett, Interventional Cardiologist with Cardiovascular Institute of the South, said, "The Anderson cardiac team uses an evidence-based, protocol-driven, structured approach to acute care cardiology that allows clinicians to

quickly and efficiently assess patients who require timely treatment. Adequate implementation of these processes allows patients to be better monitored, ensuring they are not sent home too early or admitted unnecessarily."

By voluntarily participating in the American College of Cardiology Chest Pain-MI Registry, Anderson is improving patient outcomes using relevant data to drive decision making and improving the quality of care for heart attack patients through hospital-wide evaluation of performance standards. The Chest Pain-MI Registry is the nation's largest and most authoritative quality improvement registry, with 1.5 million patient records and more than 10 years of proven success driving positive health outcomes for patients.

**Meridian's Only Accredited Chest Pain Center  
and Open Heart Surgery Program**


# WE'RE BABY-



Newborn Rhett Smith benefits from the Baby-Friendly practices at Anderson Regional Medical Center. With him are parents Ryan and Jessica Smith, and Reba Lee, Registered Nurse and International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.



# -FRIENDLY



Anderson Regional Medical Center has been designated as a Baby-Friendly facility by Baby-Friendly, USA, Inc., the national authority for the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. Anderson joins 600-plus facilities across the United States that have achieved this honor, 18 of which are located in Mississippi.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is a global program sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to recognize hospitals that offer an optimal level of care for mothers and their babies. Baby-Friendly hospitals educate mothers on the importance of breastfeeding, provide outstanding maternity care, and achieve excellent infant feeding outcomes and mother/baby bonding.

John G. Anderson, President and CEO, said, "Our Birth Center staff completed hundreds of hours of training over the course of four years to achieve this designation. The training culminated in a rigorous on-site survey that our staff passed with

zero recommendations for improvement. To say we are proud of them is an understatement. This is yet another example of evidence-based care brought to Meridian by our Anderson team, and a continuation of offering quality care in women's and children's health."

Baby-Friendly practices are centered around parents making educated, informed decisions regarding feeding choices, bonding after delivery and keeping the family together during the hospital stay. With the Baby-Friendly model, nursing care has been moved to the bedside instead of using older, standardized nursing practices that separated mom and baby. The nursing staff is trained to make skilled observations and perform necessary procedures safely at the bedside. Even routine hearing tests are now completed in the room with the family.

Lindsey Robertson, RN, CLC, Baby-Friendly Team Lead, said, "In the past, a baby was taken to the nursery immediately after delivery for assessments and a bath before mom got to hold her baby. Now, the infant is placed in mom's arms

first and all nursing procedures take place in the room with the family."

The Baby-Friendly practice of "rooming-in" allows the baby to stay in the hospital room 24/7 if mom desires. This gives parents the opportunity to get better acquainted with their baby's feeding cues and sets the stage for a successful breastfeeding journey. The newborn nursery is still available for moms who need to rest after delivery.

The prestigious Baby-Friendly Hospital designation is part of BlueCross BlueShield of Mississippi's Maternity Quality Model to support healthy mothers and babies. Tom Fenter, MD, BlueCross Blue Shield of Mississippi Chief Medical Officer, said, "BlueCross BlueShield congratulates Anderson Regional Medical Center for attaining Baby-Friendly designation. With this achievement, Anderson is demonstrating its commitment to provide the type of care that gives babies a healthy start to life. BlueCross BlueShield is proud of our network hospital partners that are focused on improving the quality of care for mothers and babies in Mississippi."

## National Designation Means Better Outcomes for Babies



## 2019 Handprints of Hope

Anderson Regional Cancer Center treats hundreds of patients each year with the goal of helping each and every one to become a cancer survivor. In honor of National Cancer Survivors Day, we invite all survivors to our Center to create a canvas with “Handprints of Hope.” The results are always astonishing and uplifting. This year, we had 151 cancer survivors place their handprints (via paint) on our canvas — representing 1,277 total years of survivorship!

# Anderson Regional Cancer Center Remains NATIONALLY ACCREDITED

The Commission on Cancer (CoC) of the American College of Surgeons (ACoS) has granted an additional Three-Year Accreditation to Anderson Regional Cancer Center — an accreditation that has remained in place since the Center opened in 2003.

To earn CoC accreditation, a cancer program must meet or exceed 34 CoC quality care standards, be evaluated every three years through a survey process and maintain levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered care.

“By voluntarily submitting to a survey that closely examines our facility and procedures, we are showing our patients we strive for the highest quality care possible,” said John G. Anderson, President and CEO.

As a CoC-accredited cancer center, Anderson Regional Cancer Center takes a multidisciplinary approach to treating cancer as a complex group of diseases that requires

consultation among surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, diagnostic radiologists, pathologists and other cancer specialists. This multidisciplinary partnership results in improved patient care.

“CoC accreditation is another demonstration of our team’s dedication to clinical excellence” according to Cancer Center Director Robert J. Guasco. Earlier in 2019, Anderson Regional Cancer Center was recognized as the first cancer treatment center in North America (and second in the world) to interface one of the most advanced radiation delivery systems, TomoTherapy®, with a highly effective computerized clinical platform developed by RaySearch Laboratories, USA. “These achievements are a reflection of our commitment to serving the oncology needs of our community with technology, knowledge and compassion,” Guasco said.





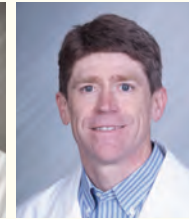
Dr. Barry Calvit



Dr. Eric Plott



Dr. Anthony Thomas



Dr. Greg Thaggard

# GET HEPATITIS C CURED

An estimated 2.4 million people in the United States are living with Hepatitis C. For some people, Hepatitis C is a short-term illness. But for 70-85 percent of people who become infected, it becomes a long-term, chronic infection. Chronic Hepatitis C is a serious disease that can result in long-term health problems, including liver disease, liver failure, liver cancer and even death.

The newly formed Anderson Digestive Health Center provides complete, comprehensive care for chronic Hepatitis C infections, offering patients the tools, medications, management and an expert care team to successfully complete the full course of treatment.

Dr. Anthony Thomas, gastroenterologist with Internal Medicine Clinic, is one of four physicians treating

patients at Anderson Digestive Health Center. He said, "With the recent development of new medications, Hepatitis C is more easily treated and curable. The newest treatment regimen is with pills that have minimal side effects. Statistics show that patients who follow a strict adherence to the treatment course with follow-up can expect a 97 percent cure rate. What was previously a devastating and often fatal disease can now be cured with these new, safer and shorter treatments."

While continuing to see patients in their respective clinics, Dr. Thomas is joined by gastroenterologists Dr. Barry Calvit and Dr. Eric Plott (both of Internal Medicine Clinic) and Dr. Greg Thaggard (Meridian Medical Associates) on a rotating schedule at Anderson Digestive Health Center.

# RECOGNITION Matters



Kim Knight, Stimwave Representative, presents Dr. Azhar Pasha and the Pain Management Center of Meridian with the Center of Excellence Award.

Stimwave Technologies, the leading innovator of wireless medical pain relief implant bioelectric technology, announced that Pain Management Center of Meridian has been named a Stimwave Center of Excellence as part of its national program to spotlight physicians who provide unparalleled commitment and dedication to patient outcomes.

"I am honored to be part of this important initiative to advance standards of care for patients suffering from chronic pain," said Dr. Azhar Pasha. "Stimwave's Wireless Pain Relief technology offers patients an innovative pain management therapy without exposure to addictive medication."

As a Stimwave Center of Excellence, Dr. Pasha gives back to the greater Stimwave community by serving on a committee providing critical, ongoing feedback and insights in the areas of clinical, product, procedural, reimbursement and education.

Dr. Pasha is the director and founder of Pain Management Center of Meridian, which provides comprehensive pain management and customized treatment plans for patients, including a full range of interventional procedures and medication plans.





Anderson Wound Healing & Hyperbaric Center was named a Center of Excellence for outstanding dedication to its patients by Healogics Inc. This award demonstrates the Center's commitment to excellence and a focus on creating an exceptional patient experience. To achieve the Center of Excellence designation, Anderson Wound Healing & Hyperbaric Center excelled in all of the Key Performance Indicators, including patient satisfaction (93.1%), healing rate (94.85%), outlier rate (11.96%) and median days to heal (34 days).

In celebration of Wound Care Awareness Week, Meridian Mayor Percy Bland (above, third from left) issued a proclamation to promote the importance of tending to chronic wounds. There are 6.7 million Americans living with chronic wounds right now — and the Wound Healing & Hyperbaric Center is a leader in caring for patients with these issues.



Anderson Diabetes Center's Denise Roberts, RD, LD, CDE, (left) and Terri Patterson, RN, BSN, CDE, are recipients of the Top Performance Award from Vizient Southern States Diabetes Management Collaborative.

## Diabetes Program Awarded for Top Performance

Vizient Southern States, a membership alliance for non-profit health care providers focused on delivering cost-effective care, recently named its Diabetes Management Collaborative, which includes Anderson, as Outstanding Collaborative of the Year, delivering more than \$8 million in savings to member hospitals.

Within the Diabetes Management Collaborative, member hospitals are awarded for their individual performance. Anderson Regional Medical Center received a Top Performance Award for its overall score on the following metrics: reductions in patient

readmissions, average length of stay, emergency department revisits and insulin adverse drug events.

Anderson Diabetes Center, led by Certified Diabetes Educators Terri Patterson, RN, BSN, and Denise Roberts, RD, LD, reduced hypoglycemic events by 20 percent over the past year.

Anderson President and CEO, John G. Anderson, said, "There is truly no better team of diabetic practitioners anywhere. Terri and Denise have unmatched passion for the diabetic community, as demonstrated by their dedication to stay on the forefront of knowledge and evidence-based practice in the management of these individuals and this debilitating disease. They are more than

deserving of this accolade in recognition of their incredible work."

Patterson, Anderson Diabetes Program Coordinator, said, "Since 1991, Anderson Diabetes Center has offered a comprehensive diabetes treatment and education program. We are accredited by the American Diabetes Association, which sets standards to ensure our program is well-organized and effective in providing the instruction and support needed to manage the disease. Our team works together to guide and advise individuals on all aspects of managing diabetes and help them achieve an optimum level of health."



At left, Adam Hodges leads the Diabetes Prevention Class in a discussion on how to make being active a way of life.

## Diabetes Prevention Program Earns CDC Recognition

Anderson Health & Fitness Center has earned the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Preliminary Recognition for their Diabetes Prevention Program, which seeks to address type 2 diabetes before it starts.

General Manager Adam Hodges, said, "This comes after a year of hard work and opens the door for more people to join the program. Last year we had 28 people and we are expecting the program to continue growing year after year. More than 86 million people in the United States have pre-diabetes and we are on a mission to change the statistics."

In a letter addressed to Hodges, Ann Albright, PhD, RDN, Director of the Division of Diabetes Translation at the CDC, said, "It is immensely gratifying to see the science of diabetes prevention being implemented to

improve the public's health. You and your colleagues should be extremely proud of this accomplishment. It is programs like yours that are turning the tide in the fight against the epidemic of type 2 diabetes. Thank you for all that you are doing and for your commitment to reducing the preventable burden of diabetes in the U.S."

Through the Diabetes Prevention Program, the Health & Fitness Center is working to help people stop the progression of pre-diabetes into type 2 diabetes via proper diet, exercise and education. This one-year program gives participants access to all of the center's amenities, plus educational sessions on relevant health topics, consultations with a Registered Dietitian and instruction from certified personal trainers.



# OUTREACH Matters



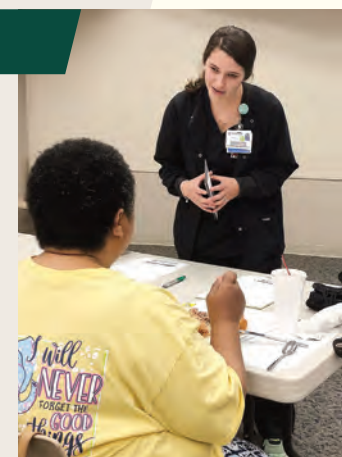
Members of  
Anderson's  
WorkHealth team  
at the Health Fair.

The Student Health Coalition of Mississippi held a free Health Fair at The Tommy E. Dulaney Center in July. They provided free blood pressure, blood glucose and BMI screenings for individuals ages 18 and above. Participants were provided with informational pamphlets on healthy living and ways to get plugged into Meridian's resources to help prevent and/or manage diseases. Participants were also given a list of local physicians that served as a referral sheet for people without a primary care provider. Anderson Regional Health System and Anderson Health & Fitness Center each had a booth at the event, with representatives providing educational resources and an avenue to manage goals.

Anderson offered two "Heart Check" sessions for community members in 2019. Screenings included blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels, Body Mass Index (BMI), heart rhythm during an electrocardiogram (EKG) and calcium score via CT scan.



Anderson began offering Joint Camp in 2019 to help patients prepare for joint replacement surgery. During the two-hour session, patients and caregivers receive important information from a variety of hospital staff including a nurse, case manager, physical therapist and pharmacist. At the first session, Orthopedic Nurse Manager Heather Cleveland, discussed what to expect after surgery and gave tips on the recovery process.



Early detection makes all the difference in how a condition is treated. To that end, Anderson offers a variety of screenings throughout the year. In order to reach those who may not have access to medical care, many of the screenings are free to community members.



#### ***Skin Cancer Screening***

From left: Christy Napp, RN; Dr. Lee Thornton; Libba Cooper, RN; Kerri Gibson, RN; Dr. Kenneth Saul; and Dr. Mark Elliott.



#### ***Prostate Screening***

From left: Dr. Mark Phillips; Christy Napp, RN; Libba Cooper, RN; Dr. James Wallace, Stephanie Poppy, RN; Marcus Willis; and Dr. Robert Dilworth.



#### ***Hernia Screening***

From left: Christy Napp, RN; Dr. Dru Denison; Dr. Hans Tulip; and Libba Cooper, RN.

Educating the public about health issues is a continuous focus for Anderson. One of the ways we accomplish this goal is with Lunch & Learn sessions. Our informative Lunch & Learn series is open to the community and gives attendees a chance to hear important health information from experts.

Sessions included:

- Eat Smart for a Healthier Brain, led by Registered Dietitian Karla Bailey
- Cancer 101 - Dispelling the Myths, led by Dr. Caleb Dulaney, Radiation Oncologist at Anderson Regional Cancer Center
- Coping with Cancer through Journaling, led by Ginny Ruffin, LCSW, ACSW, OSW-C (Breast Cancer Patient Navigator)
- Taking Care of Your Body - Important Health Screenings, led by Sheila Davidson, RN, MSN, Nurse Practitioner
- Sleep Apnea Treatment Explained, with information on Inspire Therapy, led by Dr. Kary Whitehead, Sleep Medicine Specialist; Dr. Cody Aull, Otolaryngologist; Maggie Mott, Sleep Lab Manager; and Katie Stringer, Inspire Territory Manager (pictured at right).







The mission of MORA (Mississippi Organ Recovery Agency) is to save and improve lives through the gift of organ, eye and tissue donation — and Anderson works to support that mission through sponsorships and information-building campaigns, including a door decorating challenge.

At the annual MORA Spero Awards celebration in Jackson, Anderson received three top awards and was nominated for three others. Anderson received the Hospital of Excellence Award for meeting or exceeding national goals for organ donation; plus Anderson-North received the Hospitals for Hope Award (Platinum Status) and Anderson-South received the

Hospitals for Hope Award (Silver Status).

Anderson was also proud to be a part of the second annual Allie Cat Run and Festival that benefits MORA. Anderson nurses staffed the first aid tent and Health & Fitness Center staff assisted with the race.



## Support Groups and Classes

Alzheimer's Support Group

Breastfeeding Class

Childbirth Class

Diabetes Support Group

Infant Safety Class

Multiple Sclerosis Support Group

Newborn Care Class

Sibling Class

Stroke Support Group

Tobacco Cessation Class

Visit [AndersonRegional.org](http://AndersonRegional.org) for dates, times and details.





The 2019 Christmas Tribute raised \$8,000 for the Cancer Patient Benevolence Fund. Paisley Ivey and her brother Asher hang ornaments on the tree honoring their grandparents, Kathy Evans and Sarah Nell Ivey, during the Christmas Tribute ceremony.

*(Photo by Paula Merritt)*

*Courtesy The Meridian Star*

The 12th annual Christmas Tribute ornament hanging ceremony took place at Anderson Regional Medical Center, raising funds for the Cancer Patient Benevolence Fund. The fund helps local cancer patients with needs not met by insurance. Robert Guasco, director of Anderson Regional Cancer Center, said the event “continues the tradition of recognizing and honoring those we have loved and those who have loved us and providing care for those who need it. It’s uplifting when we hear about what we meant to each other.”

LaShasta Taylor hung an ornament in memory of her mother, who lost her 12-year battle with cancer.

“It means everything to me,” said Taylor. “To hang an ornament in her honor is a blessing and her legacy will live on forever for the things she did in the cancer community.”

Ginny Ruffin, oncology social worker and patient navigator with Anderson, said the process isn’t just a way to honor people, but helps other cancer patients with their needs as well.

“Each year you can purchase an ornament in honor or in memory of a loved one. It doesn’t have to be a cancer patient,” said Ruffin. “One hundred percent of the purchase price goes directly to help our cancer patients with their needs.”

Audrey Ivey and her family have been participating in the event since 2011. “The ceremony is always very humbling for me and we’ve been on both sides of it,” said Ivey. Ivey and her children hung two ornaments, one for her mother who survived cancer and one for her mother-in-law, who passed away.



## Metro Offers EMT Training for Firefighters

*Courtesy The Meridian Star*

As a way to address the shortage of emergency medical technicians and paramedics, a partnership of Meridian health care advocates offers classes to firefighters in Meridian. The Basic EMT Skills Class is made possible through a partnership among Anderson Regional Health System, the City of Meridian, Metro Ambulance and Meridian Community College.

Clayton Cobler, Lauderdale County Coroner and director of Metro Ambulance, said Meridian Fire Chief Ricky Leister reached out to Metro about offering the classes. Cobler said firefighters trained as EMTs can help at a scene, delivering aid before ambulances arrive. The course aims to “get as many people trained as soon as possible,” Cobler said.

Leister said that over the last couple of years, firefighters have been taking more EMS calls than fire calls. Leister said firefighters are currently trained in basic medical care, but these classes offer more advanced care. “In order to accomplish our

mission, we have to step it up a level,” he said.

The partnership also allows some firefighters to work part-time with Metro so they can get hands-on EMT training.

Meridian firefighter Jonathan Chiriche signed up for the classes to upgrade his capabilities as a first responder. He hopes to “learn more medical skills and increase his knowledge of how to handle a scene.”

Shannon Mathis, who has been with the fire department for a decade, said he likes the convenience of the classes, as he holds a second job as a pastor. “This is the first time that it’s been offered in an easy and convenient manner for us,” Mathis said. “In the past, we always had to do it on our own time.”

Like Chiriche, he hopes the course improves his skills as a first responder. “We respond to a lot of accidents with injuries, so it’s something I need to be better prepared for as part of my job,” Mathis said.



With a motto of *#BeAndersonFit*, Anderson Health & Fitness Center continues to be the area’s leader in helping individuals develop a healthier lifestyle. The 36th annual Anderson Cup Road Race featured 258 participants and raised more than \$2,000 for Meridian Freedom Project, a local leadership program for youth. The Health & Fitness Center also partnered with Meridian Freedom Project on a six-week course to teach students about the benefits of an active lifestyle and healthy eating.





Anderson teamed up with American Heart Association and Cardiovascular Institute of the South for Go Red for Women, a well-attended event bringing the latest information on heart disease to community members.



Anderson celebrated Breast Cancer Awareness month with a "Pink Party" for survivors and caregivers. Meridian Honda provided a special "Kiss Cancer Goodbye" car for the event.







At the MCC scholarship ceremony are seated, from left, Jan Anderson, John G. Anderson, Jan Farrington, Dr. Joe Anderson, Dr. John Clay, Dr. Thomas Huebner and Dr. Lara Collum. Back row, from left, are Jason Cain, Brittany Boone, Anna Holmes, Brandi Wyatt, Jacob Whitney, Shydai Lewis, Parker Rigby, Jimesha Walker and Wanda Cooper.

Thankful for opportunities, Meridian Community College student Jimesha Walker said, "I will continue to shoot for the stars." Walker was one of seven MCC third semester Associate Degree Nursing Program students who received Anderson Regional Health System scholarships in 2019.

The 31st annual scholarship presentation recognized outstanding nursing students

who received the honor based on academic ability, nursing excellence, the recommendation of MCC faculty, an application and a written essay.

In offering thanks to Anderson officials, Dr. Lara Collum, MCC Dean of Nursing, said, "these scholarships truly impact lives." She added the recipients are excellent students, and the nursing program is proud of them.

Walker, who was the recipient of the Jeff Anderson Scholarship, said she was

thankful. "I am very, very grateful for this scholarship. It will help out a lot," she added.

John G. Anderson, President and CEO of Anderson Regional Health System, said with roughly 70 percent of their employees who serve as nurses, "we have the luxury and benefit of MCC's Nursing Program to recruit nurses who can take care of the ill and infirmed individuals who cross our threshold every day."

Megan Minor, NICU Registered Nurse, has met the requirements for Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST). Minor attended a three-day course in Biloxi provided by Safe Kids Worldwide and learned many aspects of car seat safety. Minor said, "I learned so many things that I thought I already knew but didn't.

For instance, the weight limit of the LATCH system that holds the car seat in place includes the weight of the seat PLUS the child. The LATCH weight limit varies from vehicle to vehicle, so you have to check the manual to be sure."

As Lauderdale County's first and only CPST, Minor offers complimentary car seat checks for Anderson Regional Birth Center patients to help reassure parents that the seat is installed properly. She will make sure parents aren't making common mistakes like adding things to make their child more comfortable. "Newborn cushions that surround an infant actually interfere with the safety of the seat. We have to put the baby's safety ahead of comfort, and at that age it's not likely that he/she is

actually uncomfortable," Minor said.

As part of Anderson's Childbirth Education Series, the Infant CPR Class will now be named the Infant Safety Class, with car seat safety being taught in addition to CPR training. "Even the most expensive car seat isn't safe if it's installed incorrectly," Minor said.



Megan Minor, RN, makes sure Major Lockhart is safely buckled into his car seat before heading home with his parents.



Bridgette Cerda Marin was chosen as Lauderdale County's 2019 Rural Medical and Science Scholar, sponsored by Anderson Regional Health System. Marin, a junior at Clarkdale High School, attended a four-week program at Mississippi State University during the summer, where she took two college courses and participated in activities that allowed her to explore career options in healthcare. Presenting Marin with a check to cover the cost of the program is Dr. Keith Everett, Chief Medical Officer of Anderson Regional Health System.

# ANDERSON *M*atters

## DOGGONE GOOD

It's not every day that you see a dog in a patient's room, but therapy dog Stella and her handler, Rebecca Pearson, are bringing cheer to patients, staff and everyone they encounter at Anderson Regional Health System.

Interaction with therapy dogs has been shown to be very beneficial for patients. The act of petting a dog is a stress reliever. It provides a calming effect that can lower blood pressure and diminish overall physical pain, in addition to putting a smile on the patient's face.

Stella, a three-year-old retired racing greyhound, was adopted by Dr. Eric and Rebecca Pearson from Alabama Greyhound Adoption in Birmingham. Pearson said she

had always wanted a greyhound, and upon learning how well greyhounds performed as therapy dogs, it was a "match made in heaven."

Pearson continued, "Greyhounds have a calm, quiet nature and bond deeply and quickly. They also have a low maintenance coat that keeps them from carrying the typical dog odor. Stella's social and leash training at the race track provided a quick and easy transition to service as a therapy dog."

Pearson began the therapy dog certification process as soon as she brought Stella home. They started with basic obedience training followed by behavioral training necessary for certification by the Alliance of Therapy

Dogs (ATD).

Pearson said, "Stella went through several months of training and then she was tested for behavioral compliance around other dogs, people, loud noises, medical emergencies, wheel chairs and other medical equipment. We were observed as a team on three medical facility visits prior to receiving certification by ATD."

When Stella is working, she proudly dons a red vest and collar tag with the ATD logo symbolizing her training and certification.

Registered Nurse and Infection Preventionist Practitioner, Andrea Laird, is leading the therapy dog program to ensure compliance with infection control regulations. "Stella and Rebecca are essentially volunteers, so they have



Stella  
& handler  
Rebecca  
Pearson

# THERAPY

undergone the same onboarding process we require for our volunteers. This includes vaccination requirements as well as education on privacy practices and personal protection equipment. Rebecca has been educated on contamination precautions, places they are permitted and places that are prohibited to ensure everyone is safe."

In addition, a Patient Representative accompanies Rebecca and Stella throughout their visits and asks each patient if they are interested in visiting with Stella prior to entering the room.

John G. Anderson, President and

CEO of Anderson Regional Health System, said, "We are really excited to be Stella's exclusive hospital partner. During their first visit, staff, patients and visitors welcomed Stella and Rebecca with open arms. There is no limit to the amount of happiness, comfort and reassurance you can give a patient and we know Stella will have a big role in that."

The therapy dog program is open to adult and pediatric inpatients at Anderson-North and Anderson-South, patients at Anderson Regional Cancer Center and outpatient therapy patients.





The anesthesia team at Anderson is following Enhanced Recovery After Surgery protocols, also known as ERAS, to help patients experience less pain after surgery, leave the hospital sooner and recover more quickly. These enhanced anesthesia methods allow earlier mobilization after surgery, earlier removal of tubes and drains and earlier allowance of food intake. ERAS is improving patient outcomes by providing a smooth transition from being under anesthesia during surgery to waking up and starting the road to recovery.





## Waters Named Director of Philanthropy

With a growing focus on community partnerships, Anderson Regional Health System is more philanthropic-minded than ever before. To support and enhance these efforts, Anderson recruited Christin Waters to assume the role of Director of Philanthropy. John G. Anderson, President and CEO, said, "Waters' knowledge, experience and established relationships throughout this area will



enable us to more fully serve and support our patients and community, in essence, strengthening our goal of 'Standing Together' with our community."

In addition to community outreach, one of Waters' primary duties will be oversight of the Cancer Patient Benevolence Fund. One-hundred percent of the donations made to this important fund are used to assist local cancer patients with special needs not paid by insurance.

Waters will also manage the development of several new fundraising initiatives. The Standing Together Fund is a general fund that assists in advancing technology and services, acquiring state-of-the-art medical equipment and improving and building necessary facilities. A pediatric fund will enhance, upgrade and support pediatric services. Donations made to the Guardian Angel Fund in honor of a physician, nurse or staff member will assist with focused needs throughout the hospital.



Pediatric patients who are hospitalized on Tuesdays are having fun celebrating "Tutu Tuesdays" with the staff of the Dr. William G. Riley Inpatient Pediatric Unit. On the first two Tuesdays of every month, staff members in this unit dress up and provide tutus and bow ties for the pediatric patients to wear, too. The young patients love this event and it helps get their minds off illnesses or injuries, staff members noted.



Undergoing a surgical procedure is an uneasy time for anyone, and it can be especially tough for children. In an effort to ease the fears of our pediatric surgical patients, Jessica Townsend, Operating Room Tech, donated stuffed animals for kids to snuggle with as they prepare for their procedure. Jessica inspired many of her coworkers to join in the effort, now called *#PlushesforPatients*.





## CONTRIBUTIONS

- Allie Cat Run and Festival
- Alzheimer's Mississippi
- American Heart Association
- Boy Scouts of America - Choctaw Area Council
- Boys and Girls Club of East Mississippi
- Care Lodge
- Choctaw Central Athletics
- Clarkdale High School
- Community Health Improvement Network
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
- Dancing for a Cause
- Diabetes Foundation of Mississippi
- Ducks Unlimited
- East Mississippi Business Development Corp.
- East Mississippi Trauma Care Region
- EC Healthnet
- Enterprise High School
- Free Clinic of Meridian
- Hope Village for Children
- Junior Auxiliary of Meridian
- Lamar School
- Lauderdale County Sheriff's Department
- Meridian Community College
- Meridian Little Theatre
- Meridian Performing Arts Center
- Meridian Symphony Orchestra
- Meridian Youth Soccer Organization
- MIDD - Meridian
- Mississippi Arts & Entertainment Experience
- Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian
- Mississippi Kidney Foundation
- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
- National Alliance on Mental Illness - Meridian
- Navy League of the United States
- Neshoba County Fair Association
- Newton County Academy
- Northeast Lauderdale High School
- Parent Circle Support Group
- Southeast Lauderdale High School
- State Games of Mississippi
- The Montgomery Institute
- United Way of East Mississippi
- West Lauderdale High School





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