



Advanced medicine. Compassionate care. Close to home.

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#### On Our Cover

*Each time we discharge a COVID-19 patient from the hospital, we play the familiar Beatles' song "Here Comes the Sun" on our overhead speakers so everyone in the facility can celebrate the milestone. It's only fitting that the angle of this beautiful cover photo shows the sun's rays right above our Critical Care Unit, where many COVID-19 patients are being treated.*

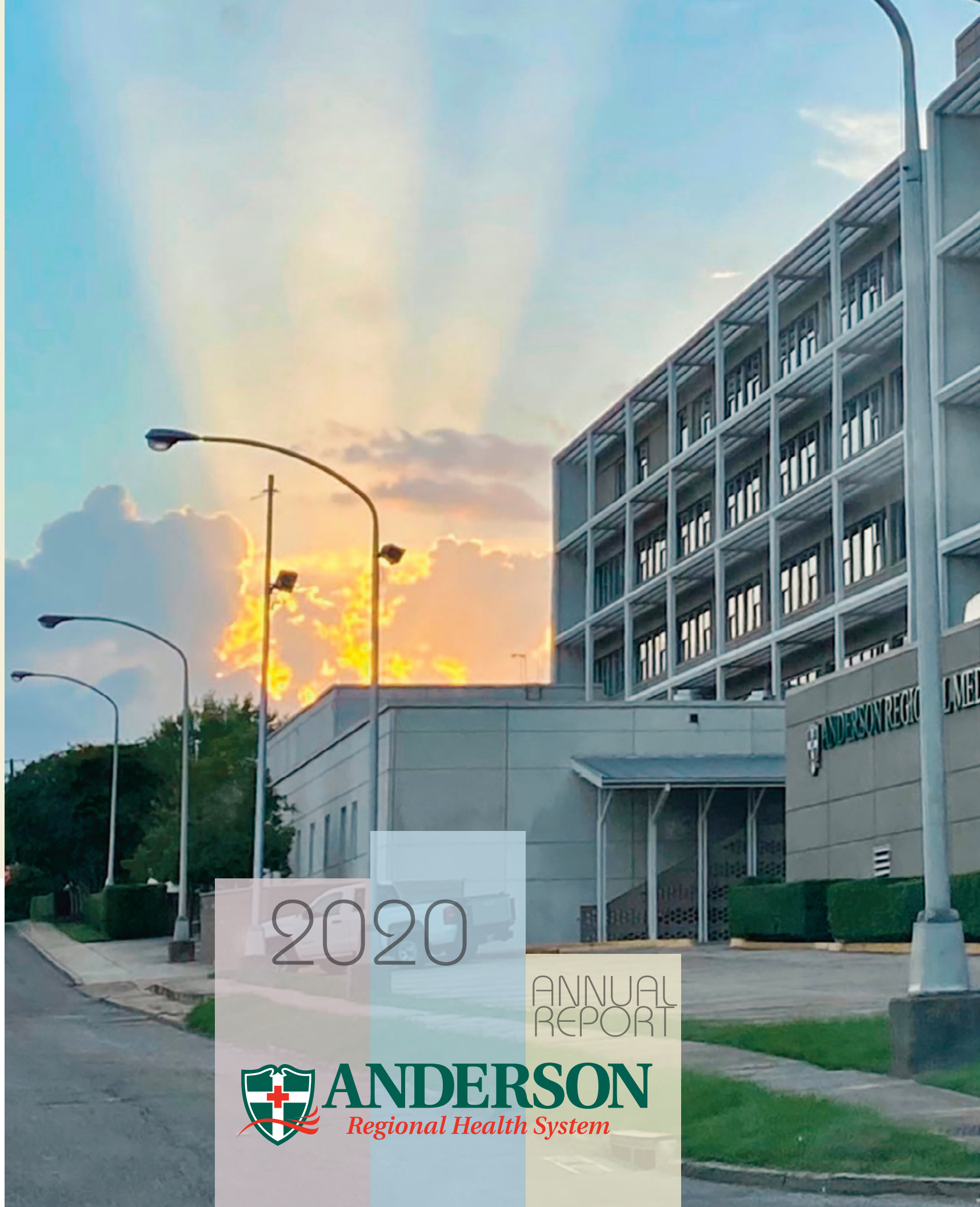


# 2020

ANNUAL  
REPORT



**ANDERSON**  
*Regional Health System*







## By the Numbers

Emergency room visits = 32,510

Inpatient admissions = 9,923

Babies born = 1,071

Surgical cases performed = 8,150

Outpatient registrations = 143,694

Clinic visits = 71,838

Days of care provided to inpatients = 54,371

Charges forgone to provide charity care = \$30,066,298

Paid employees = 1,406

Salaries, wages and benefits = \$86,154,211



*In our North Lobby,  
we display the number  
of COVID-19 patients  
we hospitalize each day,  
the cumulative days of  
care provided and the  
number of patients we  
have discharged home.  
(Photo taken April 24,  
2020)*



From President & CEO John G. Anderson .....	2
Board of Directors .....	4
2020 Medical Staff Officers & Executive Team .....	5
Standing Together .....	6
Riley Foundation Funds Ventilators .....	10
Community Outreach .....	12
PERT Saves Patient's Life .....	16
New Services .....	18
Call to Honor .....	22
Awards, Accreditations & Recognition .....	24
Support Groups & Classes .....	30
Contributions .....	31

### 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



What can you say about a world-wide pandemic that zeroed in on our local healthcare system? What can you say when your anxious and scared community turns to you for help? What can you say when your staff faces chaotic, life-threatening unknowns — both to themselves and to their patients?

**What I can say, with the deepest respect and gratefulness, is that WARRIORS WORK HERE.**

When we reported our first COVID-19 patient on March 25, 2020, we had already activated our emergency response incident command center to prepare as best we could. We immediately outfitted 27 critical care beds and 18 medical beds with negative pressure capability to meet CDC guidelines for treating COVID-19 patients; and know that we only had three negative pressure beds prior to the pandemic.

Anderson Regional Medical Center quickly became one of the busiest hospitals in the state for the care of COVID-19 patients. And hospital staff weren't only taking care of pandemic patients; we still maintained care of non-COVID-19 critically ill patients. To provide more intensive care beds, we instituted "surge" actions, including combining all ventilator assets, acquiring portable vents from the state stockpile and redeploying anesthesia machines from idle operating rooms.

Innovation became our hallmark. Ventilators acquired from the state were battery operated; our bio-medical and plant operations departments converted them to continuous direct current, preventing interrupted patient ventilation. Our Central Sterile department adapted high temperature sterilization equipment just to sterilize N-95 face masks, as personal protective equipment (PPE) was in short supply.

These two examples do not tell the human story; the story of our staff developing measures to protect themselves and treat patients. Our Materials Management team jumped in first, stockpiling PPE when the first news of COVID-19 began circulating. Our staff created "buddy systems" for nursing care, placing IV pumps outside of patient rooms. We continue to use this system as it lessens the use of PPE and reduces staff exposure and demand. Our staff learned to prone patients on ventilators and use high-flow oxygen in lieu of ventilators when possible. In addition, they incorporated convalescent plasma, Remdesivir, steroids and vitamin infusions into our arsenal of treatments to combat this disease.

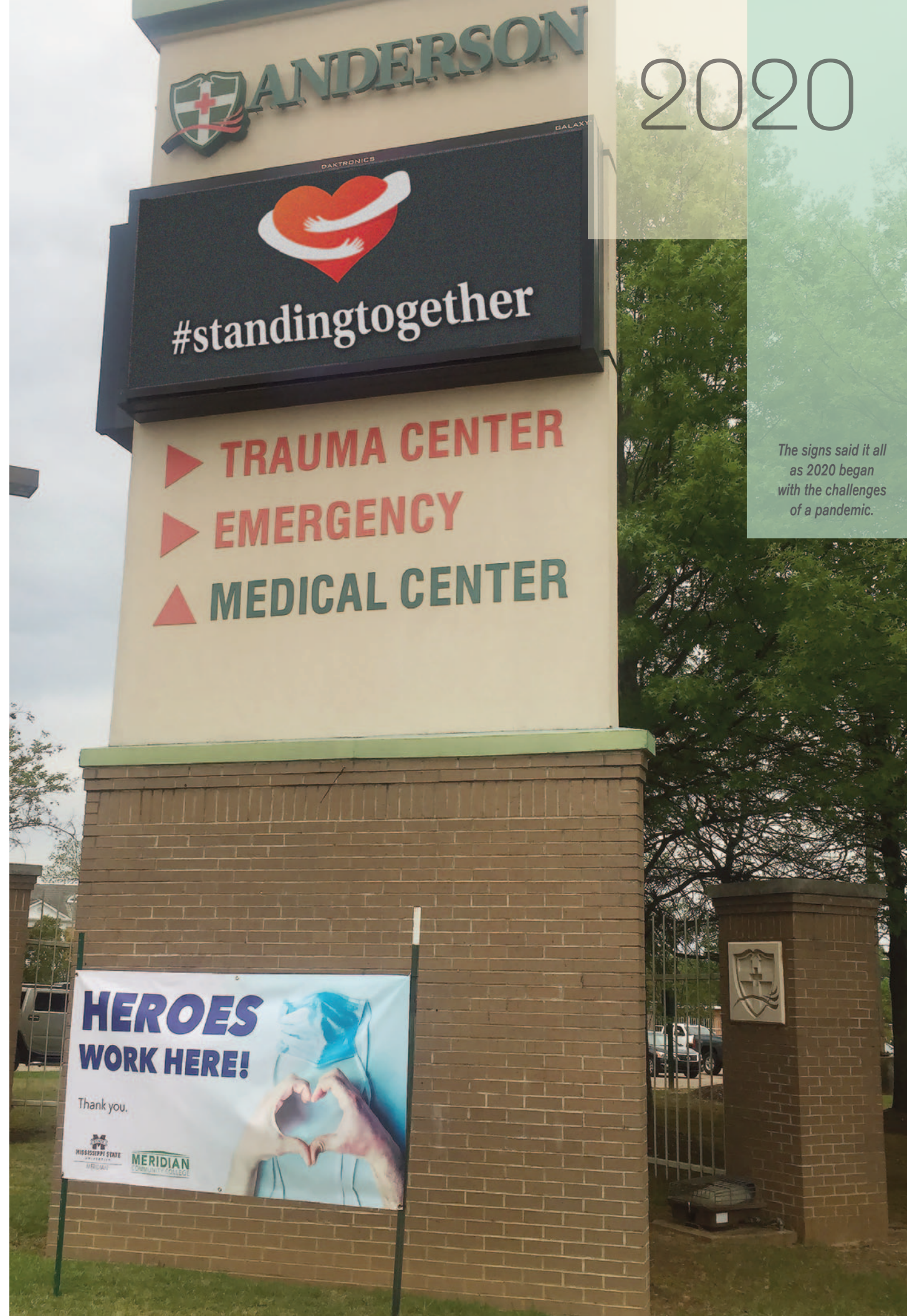
Since March 2020, more than 7,652 days of care have been provided to COVID-19 patients hospitalized at Anderson. That translates to nearly 21 YEARS of care in just 11 months.

The pandemic overwhelmed the world and has had a lasting impact on our hospital system. Most health systems in the U.S have lost 30 to 40 percent of revenue as elective services were cancelled and clinic visits curtailed. We were not immune.

I would offer that in this year of the pandemic — 2020 — and in facing the most trying of circumstances, this organization and its people have upheld the mission, vision and values of Anderson Regional Health System and have done so with the highest honor, esteem and tenacity.

You will see in our Annual Report, to paraphrase William Faulkner, we did not merely endure; we prevailed.

John G. Anderson, FACHE  
President and CEO



2020

The signs said it all  
as 2020 began  
with the challenges  
of a pandemic.



## Board of Directors



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

**Gay Hill**

**Jan Farrington**



**Dr. Shawn Anderson**

**Thad Quarles**

**Dr. John Clay**



**David Vowell**

**Brad Huff**

## Medical Staff



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

**Dr. Muzaffar Rahat**  
Vice Chief of Staff

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

**Dr. Hans Tulip**  
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, FACHE**  
Vice President  
of Operations



Dr. Matt Coker gives the thumbs up sign as he receives one of the first COVID-19 vaccinations at Anderson Regional Medical Center in December.



## Standing Together

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; Do not be discouraged, For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1-9

This verse was prominently featured on our outdoor digital sign throughout 2020 as we, like the rest of the nation’s health care facilities, grappled with the pandemic. The advent of the pandemic saw everyone at Anderson gear up for a “new normal,” with extensive measures to keep staff, patients and the public safe — for all procedures.

The response from the community could not have been more overwhelming or gratifying. It was real proof that by “Standing Together,” we could not be discouraged.

As personal protective equipment (PPE) demand and scarcity became a challenge, the external response — both by the community and businesses — was tremendous. Lazy-Boy Corporation in Newton and Lakeshore Studios in Meridian converted their operations to the manufacture and distribution of facemasks and clear shields to all Meridian hospitals. Thousands of masks were provided and were sorely needed.

Our medical center received a constant flow of masks from “Sewing Heroes,” both individuals and church groups who made hundreds of masks using a schematic we





# Standing Together

continued

provided. These masks were sterilized on site and then provided to staff and patients. Given the nationwide supply chain interruption for PPE, it is likely our staff would have been in extreme jeopardy of exposure risk without this response from our community.

A steady stream of food, well wishes, cards, letters and (most coveted) prayers flooded the medical center during these critical times. One of the most moving events occurred when cars surrounded the hospital with lights shining and horns honking and then silence — as prayers for the staff were offered up. We often found uplifting scripture written in sidewalk chalk in the drive of the ambulance entrance and other locations. This practice continues today.

Despite the stress of these unprecedented times, we continued to celebrate our victories. Each time a COVID-19 patient is discharged, we play a chorus of The Beatles' song, "Here Comes the Sun." At publication date, this song has been played and heard overhead in our corridors more than 700 times.

COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future, but Anderson "stands together" with its staff and the public in continuing to provide safe, compassionate care for any healthcare need.



Dr. Lindsey Prewitt, right, hospital medicine physician, communicates with a nurse who is caring for a COVID-19 patient.



# Riley Foundation Grant Funds New Ventilators

Anderson Regional Health System received a \$120,000 grant from The Riley Foundation to purchase four new ventilators for the hospital's intensive and critical care units.

"We reached out to Anderson to see how we could help during the pandemic, and there was a need for additional ventilators," said Becky Farley, Executive Director with The Riley Foundation.

John G. Anderson, President and CEO of Anderson, said, "The pandemic has affected everyone, and with so much change and tragedy, health systems across the nation are facing new challenges daily. With resources stretched like never before, this grant made a huge impact in our fight against COVID-19. We are extremely grateful to The Riley Foundation for the funds that have enabled us to purchase ventilators and continue providing life-saving care to patients."

A ventilator is a life support treatment that helps patients breathe when lung function is significantly reduced. The machine is connected to the patient through a tube placed into the mouth or nose and inserted into the windpipe, a process known as intubation. The ventilator then blows air, plus oxygen if required, into the patient's lungs.

Dr. Hatem Mourad, a hospitalist working in the COVID-19 Unit at Anderson said, "Some patients who have COVID-19 develop pneumonia and severe inflammation that greatly decreases lung function. A ventilator can make the difference between life and certain death in these patients. Even if the lung is failing, a ventilator can give the patient more time to overcome the infection and support the patient until his or her lungs are able to regain function."

Marty Davidson, Board Chairman for The Riley Foundation, said, "The Riley Foundation wants to support our medical facilities in Meridian in their major fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, the grant we have given to Anderson Regional Health System for ventilators will help save lives and enable patients to recover faster from COVID-19."

"This grant was a bright spot during an unprecedented time. The support we have received from The Riley Foundation and many others in our community who are standing together with us is greatly appreciated," added Anderson.



*Pictured from left: John G. Anderson, President and CEO of Anderson Regional Health System; Becky Farley, Executive Director of The Riley Foundation; Marty Davidson, Board Chairman for The Riley Foundation; and Jessica James, Director of Respiratory Therapy at Anderson Regional Health System.*

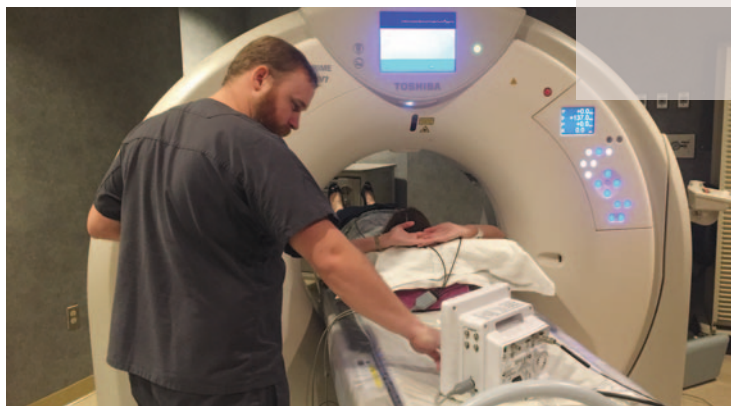




## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Go Red For Women

Our Go Red for Women event was held before the pandemic shutdown and was well attended as usual. The evening was a mix of fun and heart-health education and featured a physician panel that answered a wide array of questions about heart disease and strokes. Thank you to Jennifer Rodriguez, MD - Interventional Cardiologist; Zaid Altheeb, MD - Interventional Cardiologist with PAD focus; and Zaineb Daud, MD - Neurologist, for serving on the panel. Go Red for Women is an American Heart Association initiative that addresses the prevalence of cardiovascular disease in women.



### Healthy Heart Screening

Zane Williams, Radiologic Technologist, prepares to run a Calcium Score Test on a patient during the Healthy Heart Screening in early January at Anderson. More than 30 area residents participated in the screening. Attendees received a HeartSaver CT Scan and calcium score, complete lipid profile — total cholesterol (HDL, LDL and triglycerides), glucose level, blood pressure and heart rate, and an electrocardiogram (ECG) that was read by cardiologists from Cardiovascular Institute of the South.



Hurricane Relief  
Weather brought additional challenges in 2020 as strong hurricanes hit the Southeast. Anderson held a supply drive for those affected by Hurricanes Laura and Delta and collected many useful items that were delivered to Louisiana.



### Blood Drives

In an effort to increase blood supply, Anderson hosted blood drives in cooperation with Mississippi Blood Services. More than 200 units of blood were collected during the four drives held on the Anderson campus.



### Heart Check 2020

Anderson and Cardiovascular Institute of the South partnered for our annual Heart Check event in January. The free screening of weight, BMI, blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol is part of our continuing mission to serve our community. Members of the community also participated in a free cholesterol screening and were educated on the importance of "knowing your numbers" for heart health.





## COMMUNITY OUTREACH



### Robotics Highlighted

In January, Anderson Institute of Robotic Surgery hosted the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation's "Business After Hours" to highlight the da Vinci XI Robotic Surgery System®. Dr. Hans Tulip (at the podium) was joined by, from left, Dr. Matt Coker, Dr. Mark Phillips, Dr. Ronnye Purvis and Dr. Elizabeth Trest.



### Virtual Pink Party

"I love my Anderson team of doctors. We are so blessed to have these doctors and awesome facilities like the cancer center and breast center in our area. I am so thankful for Anderson Regional and to be able to say I am a breast cancer survivor." This quote, submitted with a picture for our 2020 Virtual Pink Party, was one of many that really touched our hearts. From one-year survivors to an entire family of warriors, each one of the contributors to our Virtual Pink Party was special. We posted a video of all on our website and social media platforms.

## Scholarships for Nursing Students

For Oregon native Angela Bautista, her decision to become a nurse wasn't as innate for her as it is for others. "No one in my family is a nurse," she said. But it was a bank co-worker who recognized Bautista's potential nursing skills and encouraged her to pursue a career in this healthcare field.

Today, the 26-year-old Meridian resident is a third semester Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program student at Meridian Community College. She is also one of 11 students to receive an Anderson Regional Health System scholarship.

For the past 32 years, Anderson has awarded these \$2,500 scholarships to outstanding MCC students. Bautista and classmate, Blair E. Black, 20, of Toomsuaba, received the Dr. Jeff Anderson Scholarships.

Jasmine C. Bates, 26, of Collinsville, and Michelle Smith, 49, were awarded the Dr. W. J. Anderson III Scholarships. Receiving the Dr. William J. Anderson Jr. Scholarships were Haley Bonner, 19, of Meridian, and Gina DuValle, 20, of Meridian.

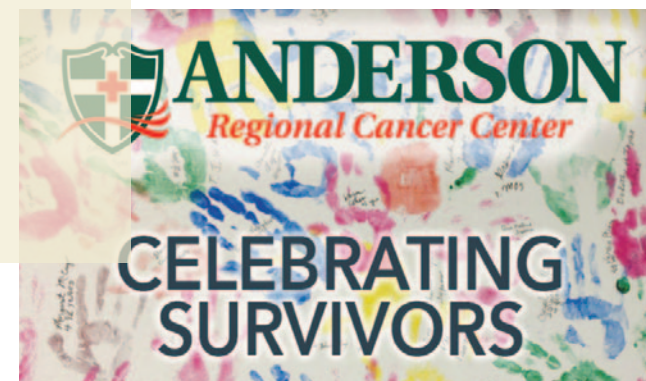
Sage McKee, 24, of Meridian, and Cameron Thornton, 23, of Collinsville, were the recipients of the Dr. Jeff Hollingsworth Scholarships. Jerome D. Adkins, 22, of Meridian, received the Reuben S. Johnson Memorial Scholarship. Kristina R. Monsour, 23, of Meridian, received the William J. Gunn, Esquire, Scholarship. Jasmine P. Bush, 25, of Meridian, was the recipient of the Anderson Board of Directors Scholarship.

Jan Farrington, Anderson Board of Directors member, said, "Anderson is deeply committed to the nursing scholarship program we initiated in 1988. We understand the importance of providing funds to help these students complete their education and attain their life goals and aspirations. These scholarships not only help the students, but also help our community."



### Christmas Tribute Raises \$10,105

Our Christmas Tribute to raise funds for the Cancer Patient Benevolence Fund looked very different in 2020, but that didn't dim the giving spirit. We raised \$10,105 from generous donors — many of whom called into our live radio show hosted by The Radio People and 97OKK. Area cancer patients need assistance throughout the year and the funds received for the CPBF help many of them.



### A Virtual Celebration

At Anderson Regional Cancer Center, we are continuously inspired and encouraged by the strength of our patients. We traditionally celebrate them on National Cancer Survivor Day with our "Handprints of Hope" canvas, but in 2020, we asked survivors to send in a photo with their years of survivorship for a virtual celebration. The result was a video that we posted on our website and all social media platforms.



## PERT Saves Patient's Life

When Sandy Temple arrived at Anderson Regional Medical Center's Emergency Room on Monday, September 28, 2020, she feared the worst. With shortness of breath and tremendous pain in her chest, she knew something was very wrong.



"Dr. Kim McDonald noticed that one of the enzymes in my bloodwork was elevated so he ordered an X-ray of my chest. That's when he saw the blood clot and realized I was in a life-threatening situation. I am so thankful he provided such a thorough examination and got me the help I needed so urgently," Temple said.

Temple was experiencing a pulmonary embolism (PE), which is a very serious condition in which a blood clot becomes lodged in one of the arteries in the lungs. This is the third leading cause of cardiovascular-related deaths in the United States.

*From left:  
Dr. Kim McDonald,  
Emergency Medicine  
Physician;  
Sandy Temple;  
and Dr. Scott Joransen,  
Interventional Cardiologist.*

In response to that statistic, Anderson has developed and put into place a Pulmonary Embolism Response Team, referred to as PERT. This team of physicians and clinical staff spent several months studying the best protocols to assess, diagnose and treat patients who suffer from this silent killer. The research resulted in the implementation of a pathway focused on increasing positive outcomes that begins with deploying the PERT when a patient displaying PE symptoms arrives at the hospital.

Dr. Scott Joransen, Interventional Cardiologist with Cardiovascular Institute of the South, said, "The PERT responded to Mrs. Temple's urgent condition and rushed her to the cath lab, where I was able to remove the blood clot from the artery with the Indigo® System CAT 8 with Lightning™, a minimally invasive catheter system that uses 'intelligent' suction to remove clots. This procedure, combined with the timely diagnosis of the PE and the highly skilled care from the physicians and staff involved, saved her life. Within hours, Mrs. Temple was feeling better, and she was discharged home the next day."

"It is a miracle that I lived through this event. God orchestrated the right people to be at the right place in my time of need and I am forever grateful," Temple said.

Because timely treatment is vital when it comes to a pulmonary embolism, Anderson's Pulmonary Embolism Response Team has written a more in-depth protocol for diagnosing a PE. The assessment is used most often in the emergency room where PE patients likely come when feeling ill, and it is also being distributed to local first responders who may identify PE patients prior to arriving at the emergency room.



## Flight for Life

If Meridian-area residents experience a traumatic injury or illness that requires a high level of critical care, two health care providers have their backs.

Anderson Regional Medical Center and the University of Mississippi Medical Center's AirCare medical helicopter transport are enhancing their regional health care partnership so more patients in need of trauma care can receive it locally from Anderson's critical care team.

If a patient requires the higher level of care that only the state's sole academic medical center can provide, AirCare — UMMC's four-helicopter medical transport program — will fly them to UMMC's Jackson-based hospitals in coordination with Anderson caregivers.

"We are actively supporting Anderson's trauma program with an initiative to keep more patients in Meridian for their medical management," said Dr. Damon Darsey, an Emergency Medicine physician and Medical Director of UMMC's Mississippi Center for Emergency Services.

"We've cared for unanticipated survivors over the last decade due to the dynamic relationship we've built in the Meridian area," Darsey said. "UMMC is providing clinical support, protocols and policies to keep patients local — but also providing the highest level of care possible in medical transport."

Working hand-in-hand with UMMC and AirCare "extends our ability to care for trauma patients locally whenever we can," said Dr. Hans Tulip, a trauma surgeon and Anderson's Trauma Medical Director.

"If we do need to transfer them, we are able to work in a way that is reliable and quick," Tulip said. "Having that ability to get patients to a facility that can take care of their problems in areas where we don't have specialists is one of the components of the trauma system."

In 2017, Anderson and UMMC announced a new affiliation to enable more area residents to stay



## NEW SERVICES

close to home for treatment. It brings the medical education, research and advanced health care offerings of UMMC to Anderson's two hospitals, cancer center and outpatient clinics, which are already established the most comprehensive system in East Mississippi and West Alabama.

The pairing of Mississippi's most advanced medical air transport with 400-bed Anderson is personal for AirCare critical care flight nurse ShyAnn King. King's late sister, LeAnna Stubbs, was in a horrific auto accident years ago in a small Alabama town.

"At every point, the system failed her," King said. "She needed an ultrasound right then. She needed blood. The medics that worked on her at the scene didn't figure out for three hours that she was bleeding to death internally."

"All the helicopter offered her that day was a fast ride," King said. "She left a one-year-old child with no mother and father, because her husband had died in an earlier accident."

With bases in Meridian, Greenwood, Jackson and Columbus, AirCare brings the capabilities of an intensive care unit to sick patients, no matter where they are. AirCare partners with Med-Trans for its pilots, equipment and helicopter maintenance.

"When you see a helicopter arrive, you expect them to bring something to the table that's not available at the time for you or your family member," King said. "AirCare absolutely does that. You are getting a Level I Trauma Center at your bedside or a ditch. We start resuscitation in that ditch."

Anderson is the only Meridian-area hospital that has its own helipad. The partnership between Anderson and UMMC dates back to 2017, but the enhanced relationship expands educational and clinical components from providers at UMMC, which has Mississippi's only Level I trauma designation and the state's only Level IV neonatal intensive care unit.



## Antibody Infusion Treatments

The newly opened Anderson Outpatient Antibody Infusion Center offers treatments to high-risk COVID-19 patients who are not hospitalized. In a clinical trial of patients with COVID-19, antibody infusions were shown to reduce COVID-19-related hospitalization or emergency room visits in patients at high risk for disease progression.



## NEW SERVICES

## UV Robot Sanitization

Anderson Regional Health System is utilizing UV light-emitting robots to provide enhanced sanitization across its facilities. Studies show that UV (ultraviolet) energy is proven to kill bacteria, fungi and viruses, including 99.999 percent of coronaviruses.

Jason Cain, RN, MSN, Director of Nursing at Anderson Regional Medical Center, said, “The robot is enhancing our infection control procedures with faster, more effective disinfection. For example, it typically takes 45 minutes to effectively clean a patient room manually with disinfectant wipes, and then another 30 to 60 minutes for the chemicals to dry and airborne germs to dissipate. The UVC energy emitted by the robot kills the germs in 15-20 minutes after a thorough manual cleaning, greatly decreasing the wait when a new patient needs to be admitted to the room. Most important, the utilization of a robot decreases the exposure risk for our environmental services team members.”

The UVC Robot specifically employs the highly germicidal 253.7nm bandwidth to cause photochemical damage to cellular DNA and virus RNA. This biological damage inactivates the cell by preventing replication and therefore infection capability.

Dr. Keith Everett, Chief Medical Officer at Anderson Regional Health System, said, “Infection prevention has always been and will always be a priority in our hospitals. Sanitizing our facilities is not a new practice, but the potency of the COVID-19 virus requires us to enhance our sanitizing routines and ensure our processes are at a maximum. The UVC robot technology is capable of removing any potential contamination in just minutes.”



## Initiative Addresses Low Birth Weight

Anderson Regional Medical Center's NICU is participating in “Express Yourself Mississippi,” a statewide program focused on helping newborn babies with low birth weights.

Reba Lee, RN, IBCLC (left), and Robin Butler, RN, BSN, are the team leads for “Express Yourself Mississippi.”



This program has been adopted as an official Mississippi Perinatal Quality Collaborative initiative, in partnership with the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The project aims to:

- Develop permanent systems change in NICUs statewide to ensure an increase in breastfeeding initiation, breastfeeding at hospital discharge and breastfeeding at one-month of life;
- Reduce racial/ethnic disparities in the provision of mothers' milk at all statewide hospitals; and
- Bring together clinicians and community stakeholders who provide breastfeeding support for mothers of preterm infants or are engaged in reducing health disparities for mothers of preterm infants.

## Anderson Offers Meds-to-Beds Program

Anderson offers Meds-to-Beds as a bedside service to enhance the discharge process for each patient. Our Anderson Pharmacy retail staff deliver discharge prescriptions directly to a patient — in the hospital — prior to leaving the hospital. The delivery service is free. Designed with our patients' health in mind, this program conveniently eliminates the need for a stop at the pharmacy on the way home. Our pharmacist processes the prescriptions and is available to discuss medications with the patient and caregivers before leaving the hospital.



Candace G. Davis  
Discharge Medication  
Technician



# Call to Honor

By Erin Kelly

Courtesy The Meridian Star

It's a Sunday afternoon in late August 2020 and the gym at the base of the parking complex at Anderson Regional Medical Center is mostly empty. A woman is walking on a treadmill beneath muted televisions. A few people are shooting hoops. From overhead comes a haunting tune, recognizable in three simple notes.

The treadmill slows to a halt and the basketball court falls silent as Taps plays over a loudspeaker.

Somewhere above, on a floor of the hospital's north campus, staff members line the hallway to show respect to a person who served our country and has now passed away.

Their hands cover their hearts as the security team escorts a flag-draped gurney to the exit, in preparation for transport to the funeral home.

The somber ceremony, known as "Call to Honor," sometimes takes place several times a month, according to Brian Fortenberry, the Director of Security Services at the hospital.

"I think it's just one way to give a final respect to people that have served our country," he said.

When a patient who has served in the military, law enforcement or as a first responder dies, the hospital makes an announcement, telling staff the floor where they may gather if they are available, Fortenberry said. Once the transport begins, Taps plays over the switchboard throughout the north or south campus, depending on the patient's location.

"I don't think I've ever been to a Call to Honor where I'm not moved to tears," said Sheila Nettles, Director of Service Excellence. "It's very powerful, and in this day and age, we need that."

The hospital uses American flags that are safe for clinical settings and stores them in specially created wooden boxes.

Former patient, Buddy Spence, a retired service member, was moved to make the boxes by hand after hearing Taps play from his hospital bed, Nettles said.

## A Moving Tribute to James Wood Jr.

U.S. Army veteran James Wood Jr. of Destin, Florida, had never heard of the ceremony until his father's death at Anderson.

James Wood Sr., 89, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, loved to play golf whenever he could and never missed a Little League game when Wood Jr. was growing up.

The retired lieutenant colonel of Louisville was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam, his son said.

Breathing problems brought him to the hospital and he died after a few days there, Wood said.

His father's Call to Honor was one of the most significant events of his life.

"They wheeled him out playing Taps and I was able to stand at attention and salute my dad for the final time," Wood said, his voice breaking. "If I could have picked a last minute, I'm not sure I could have picked it better than what they did."

He knows his father would think it was the perfect way to go out.

"To have total strangers stop what they're doing, leave their work spaces, come down there for somebody they didn't know, that was a great honor for my dad," he said. "I can't express my thanks enough to the hospital for what, in the end, is a very simple ceremony."

## Saying Goodbye to Jimmy Reynolds

"We try to attend, if possible, every one," said Ronna Nichols, the hospital's Director of Accreditation.

When it was time to say goodbye to her brother-in-law, Jimmy Reynolds, Ronna knew she wanted to attend the Call to Honor for her family.

Reynolds was an officer for the Jones County Drug Court, with a reputation for giving tough love as he helped people turn their lives around, his wife Susan said.

## Honoring Larry Covert

After retiring as a decorated combat veteran from the United States Marine Corp, Larry Covert devoted himself to the Meridian Police Department as a policeman and detective. When he died, his wife Beth, son Lance and sister, Jan Nowlan, lined the hall, knowing what would come next.

"The nurses where everywhere," Beth said. "It's a nice thing to show that they care."

Jan Nowlan recorded the moment, less than a minute long, on her phone.

"I could feel the tears while I was looking through the camera," she said. "I looked up and all the nurses were crying, too, as if they were just feeling it as much as we were."



Anderson Security Officer Kenneth Knighton, center, escorts a flag-draped gurney pushed by Chuck Overby, Funeral Assistant for James F. Webb Funeral Home, during the Call to Honor ceremony for Larry Covert.

Maj. James Wood Sr., before being promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force in 1972. Bottom photo, James Wood Sr. and his son James Wood Jr., in Philadelphia.





## Outstanding Heart Attack Care Award

Anderson Regional Medical Center is now a back-to-back recipient of the American College of Cardiology's NCDR Chest Pain MI Registry Platinum Performance Achievement Award, having received the award in both 2019 and 2020. Anderson is one of only 140 hospitals nationwide to receive the honor this year.

The award recognizes Anderson's success in implementing a higher standard of care for heart attack patients by meeting aggressive performance measures as outlined by 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 demonstrates that 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, a 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.

"As a Platinum Performance Award recipient, Anderson Regional Medical Center has established itself as a leader in setting the national standard for improving quality of care in patients with acute myocardial infarction," said Michael C. Kontos, MD, FACC, chair of the NCDR Chest Pain – MI Registry Steering Subcommittee, Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center. "By meeting the award requirements set forth in the registry, the Anderson team has demonstrated their ability to provide reliable, comprehensive treatment for heart attack patients based on current clinical guideline recommendations."

Dr. Wes Bennett, Interventional Cardiologist with Cardiovascular Institute of the South, said, "A heart attack occurs when a blood clot in a coronary artery partially or completely blocks blood flow to the heart muscle. Treatment guidelines that are used as performance measures for the award include administering aspirin upon arrival and discharge, timely restoration of blood flow to the blocked artery, smoking cessation counseling and cardiac rehabilitation, among others."

When asked how this award complements Anderson's Chest Pain Center accreditation, Bennett replied, "The Anderson cardiac team uses an evidence-based, protocol-driven and 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."







## Sleep Center Reaccredited

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) granted Anderson Sleep Disorders Center reaccreditation for another period of five years beginning in February 2020. Sleep facility accreditation through the AASM includes accreditation for all types of sleep testing, including in-center polysomnography, multiple sleep latency testing, maintenance of wakefulness testing and home sleep apnea testing.



## Roberts Tapped for GEM Award

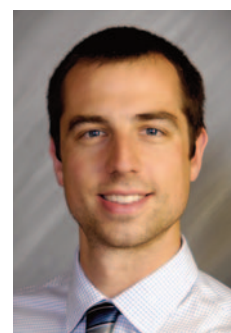
Denise Roberts, Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator, received Morrison's GEM Award for Clinical Excellence in Dietetics. The GEM award recognizes Denise's outstanding contributions to diabetes education in the inpatient and outpatient setting, as well as non-diabetic nutrition education, staff training and recognition, and assistance with Morrison's internship program.



*From left: Lynette Cockrell, Debbie Adams, Steven Brown and Don Avera.*

## Anderson Receives 2020 LEAP Award

The Anderson finance team received the 2020 LEAP Award from Strata Decision Technology, the software platform used in our budgeting process. The LEAP Award recognizes those who lead, excel, achieve and progress in the area of healthcare finance and operations. In congratulating Anderson on receiving this award, a Strata representative said, "Given we are all living through the worst financial crisis in the history of healthcare, the work of this team in support of your organization has never been more important."



## Tulip Selected as Chairperson-Elect

Dr. Hans Tulip was named Chairperson-Elect of the Mississippi Trauma Care System Foundation Board of Directors. Dr. Tulip is a board-certified General Surgeon with Medical Arts Surgical Group. He serves as the Trauma Medical Director at Anderson Regional Medical Center.



## Dulaney Named Top 20 Under 40

Dr. Caleb Dulaney, Radiation Oncologist, was named one of The Meridian Star's "Top 20 Under 40" for his efforts to provide advanced cancer treatment options at Anderson Regional Cancer Center. Dr. Dulaney is also active with the youth of our community, providing educational experiences through fun and exciting hands-on learning.



Brown Honored as Outstanding Grad  
Steven Brown, Chief Financial Officer, was named Outstanding Graduate student for the Mississippi State University Division of Business for fall 2020. He is one of five MSU students who were recognized at Meridian's fall commencement ceremonies in December at the MSU Riley Center.

## Awards Recognition Certifications



## Karrh Elected MAMSS President

Kristin Karrh was elected President of the Mississippi Association of Medical Staff Services (MAMSS). MAMSS is a statewide organization established in 1983 to provide opportunities for continuing education and to promote improvement of professional knowledge and skills by uniting people who are engaged in medical staff services.



## Wright Honored with Anderson's First DAISY Award

By Laura Hyche  
Courtesy The Meridian Star

Scottish minister and scholar Robert Leighton wrote, "The flower that follows the sun does so even on cloudy days." Filling one of the most vital roles in the health care system, nurses are often unsung heroes, the flower on that cloudy day for a COVID-19 patient.

Anderson Regional Health System celebrated one such hero when it presented Melissa Wright with The DAISY Award. DAISY is an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune SYstem.

The DAISY Foundation was formed in 1999 by the family of Patrick Barnes as a way to honor the nurses who provided quality and compassionate care to Patrick during the final stages of his battle with Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP). This award recognizes a remarkable individual who consistently demonstrates excellence in his or her work. The Barnes family acknowledges the superhuman work nurses do for their patients and their families every day.

Wright has been a Critical Care nurse with Anderson for 15 years; she has been caring for COVID-19 patients in the CCU since the pandemic began.

A resident of York, AL, Wright said she is humbled by this tribute, but even more, she said it is an honor to be nominated by one of her patients.

"This nomination was especially meaningful to me," Wright said. "My patient was in the hospital for a little over a month, but he was on a ventilator for three weeks of that time. He recovered, so he is one of our success stories."

Day in, day out, nurses who care for COVID-19 patients become the primary communicator between patients and their family members.

"We are so close with these patients; they become just as important as our family members," Wright said. "That's what makes our care for them so special."

Nurses in the CCU are highly trained professionals who provide excellent healthcare, but they also help their patients in many other ways. They take time to assist in FaceTime calls between patients and their loved ones and they encourage and reassure their patients with understanding and kind words.

Wright was presented with a certificate, a DAISY Award pin and a hand-carved stone sculpture entitled "The Healer's Touch." Additionally, everyone in the unit celebrated with cinnamon rolls made with Makara cinnamon, a favorite of Patrick's during his illness. The Barnes Family asked that whenever and wherever nurses smell cinnamon aroma, they stop and think about how special they are.

Melia Goodman, Director of Critical Care, said Wright was the perfect choice for this award.

"[Wright] is a great leader," Goodman said. "She does what it takes and she never complains. COVID-19 takes a toll on all us, our patients, their families and our nurses."

Wright is so appreciative of her DAISY, she will continue to fight the battle against COVID-19, just like all of her fellow nurses in the CCU, she said.





# Support Groups & Classes

Anderson offers a variety of free support groups and classes to the community.

- 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

# Contributions

- American Heart Association
- Boy Scouts of America - Choctaw Area Council
- Boys and Girls Club of East Mississippi
- Care Lodge
- Clarkdale High School
- Community Health Improvement Network
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
- Diabetes Foundation of Mississippi
- East Central Mississippi Trauma Region
- East Mississippi Business Development Corporation
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Free Clinic of Meridian
- Hope Village for Children
- Junior Auxiliary of Meridian
- Lamar School
- Lauderdale County Sheriff's Department
- Meridian Community College
- Meridian High School
- Meridian Youth Soccer Organization
- Meridian Symphony Orchestra
- MIDD-Meridian
- Mississippi Children's Museum — Meridian
- Newton County School District
- Parent Circle Support Group
- Queen City Athletics
- Union Public School District
- West Lauderdale High School





*Dr. Joe Anderson, Chaplain and Chairman of the Board of Directors, meets with nurses in the Critical Care Unit at Anderson Regional Medical Center. While there, he prays for and encourages these nurses who are caring for COVID-19 patients.*

