Since we began *Visiting Vignettes* in June 2013, accredited visitors have shared differences in how chapters across the country work with to be compliant with different hospital rules and regulations. In spite of those challenges and different interpretations, you are resilient and find ways to work within the guidelines and visit heart patients and families. I commend you for fostering good relationships with your individual hospitals to continue helping Mended Hearts carry out its mission of offering hope and encouragement to heart patients and their family members. Across the country, accredited visitors with the support of their individual hospitals logged more than 8478 visits in 2017. Members continue to be there to listen and share their own experiences, answer questions and offer encouragement. Thank you for becoming an accredited visitor and for giving to others from the heart.

During the 2017 year, Mended Hearts added another component to its Accredited Visitors program to provide hope and encouragement to fellow TAVR patients. Because TAVR patients experience a very unique experience, the intent is to provide them with that specialty peer-to-peer support that Mended Hearts is proud of. As an innovative valve therapy, the Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR), when compared to open heart surgery, have reduced recovery times and shorter stays in the hospital (generally 1 or 2 hospital nights).

Mended Hearts is striving to grow a strong TAVR Visitors engagement program, thanks in part to an educational grant from Edwards Lifesciences. Trained TAVR Visitors may visit with fellow TAVR patients by telephone, either pre-procedure, or post-procedure, and provide needed emotional peer support. If desired, Mended Hearts TAVR Patient Visitors may also conduct in-person visits with TAVR patients, with additional hospital training and coordinated with the chapter liaison.

Mended Hearts’ goal is to identify and engage 100 TAVR patients as Mended Hearts phone visitors for fellow TAVR patients. We are half-way toward our goal and need the help of chapter officers. To get started, chapter officers should introduce Mended Hearts peer support program to the hospital's Valve Clinic Coordinator, Structural Heart staff, or Cardiovascular Services Director where TAVR procedures are performed. Mended Hearts has developed a chapter toolkit to help get started.

**Click below to download chapter toolkit and TAVR visitor welcome packet:**

**Chapter Toolkit**
**TAVR Visitor Welcome Packet**

**Phone Training Calls increased to monthly.** All TAVR visitors go through a minimum of a one-hour telephone training to become a TAVR phone visitor. Beginning June 13, the TAVR Visitor phone training calls will be conducted on the 2nd Wednesday of each month through November. If you have identified a TAVR patient as a potential phone visitor, please share their contact information with Marcia.Baker@mendedhearts.org. Also, please help in reminding each potential TAVR visitor of the next training call (2nd Wednesday of each month at 12 noon PT / 2:00 pm CT / 3:00 pm ET).

**Tracking visits.**
As with all visits, Mended Hearts wants to track the number of TAVR visits separately, at least monthly. Chapter visiting chairs are encouraged to reach out monthly with each TAVR Visitor to track the numbers of TAVR phone visits so they may be compiled for the chapter's annual visiting report.

Throughout the summer months, some of the Mended Hearts chapters break until the fall. **Visiting Vignettes** will also suspend until September. Heart disease doesn't take a break, so I thank you for your commitment to the visiting program throughout the summer.

Heartfelt Regards,

![Image]

Dr. Fredonia B. Williams
National Visiting Chair
Southern Regional Director

**Future Questions/Topics**

**We want to hear from you!**
Other challenging questions for this newsletter may be emailed to fredoniabw@att.net.