President’s Message

We continue to be very busy visiting patients and families. I can tell, because I need to order more patient brochures to give out, after getting a big supply only two months ago. So, I have a feeling we will have a pretty busy “Season” this year. Anne and I were at Health Park visiting over Thanksgiving weekend, and we had close to a full house for surgical patients. Many of them were visiting our area when they had their cardiac “event”. It is rewarding to help them understand that life will continue, and that they can connect with a Mended Hearts chapter when they return to wherever their home is located.

Our chapter has lots going on, from our Holiday Luncheon to training (and re-training) visitors as they return to SW Florida. The Holiday Luncheon is on Wed, December 19. The organizer, Joe Jansen, has arranged an extension of the due date for sign-up. If you want to attend this enjoyable social event, contact him no later than December 17 (see p. 5 in this newsletter).

If you are not aware, we usually have a visitor open the first session of Cardiac Rehab, encouraging new patients to stick with the program, as it has enormous benefits for the patient and their caregivers. (see p. 3 in this newsletter).

Finally, enjoy the Holiday Season and all it has to offer. Stay well!

Ray

❖ New Guideline for Treating High Cholesterol

On Nov 10, 2018, American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology published a joint guideline on management of cholesterol. The new guideline promotes more personalized care for patients, compared to its 2013 predecessor, including doctor–patient risk discussions for making shared decisions on medications.

Since 2013, newer cholesterol-lowering drugs have been approved, including ezetimibe (brand name Zetia) and PCSK9 inhibitors (brand names Repatha and Praluent). The guideline suggests the new drugs should be used only by patients at very high risk of cardiovascular disease, when statins don’t work. Other patients should be treated with statins alone, up to a maximally tolerated dosage. However, they recommend an LDL threshold of more than 70 mg/L to consider addition of a non-statin (such as ezetimibe) on top of the statin.

The guideline states that PCSK9 inhibitors’ high cost makes treatment worthwhile only for a small number of patients whose LDL level remains above 70 on maximally tolerated dosage of both statin and ezetimibe.

The new guideline urges physicians to emphasize a heart-healthy lifestyle throughout their patients’ lives and to personalize treatment by taking into account heart disease in the patient’s family, whether a patient has diabetes, and whether he or she is of an ethnicity considered to be at higher risk.
Officers
President: Ray Ochester 415-4627 ray@ochester.com
Vice President: Ed Siemienas 466-9244 edsiemienas@yahoo.com
Secretary: Joe Jansen 461-0980 fjansen@aol.com
Treasurer: Mary McGhee 437-4580 marymcghee@hotmail.com

Hospital Visitors
Charles & Faye Norris
Dan & Mandy Beran
David Millington
Dick Scott
Ed Siemienas
Joe Fricker
Joe Jansen
John Ippensen
Kathy Taylor
Max Steed
Ray & Anne Ochester
Rich Garcia
Richard Brenner
Skip Marsden
Tom & Mary McGhee

Telephone Visitors
Herb Gallop
Kathy Taylor
Marianne Gail
Walter Watkins

Visitation Committee
Scheduling – Joe Cramer, 292-7735
Training -- Ray Ochester, Ed Siemienas

Newsletter Committee
Jim Plummer, Editor, 337-2721
Assistant Editor (Vacant)

Programs Committee
Joe Jansen

Sunshine Committee
Patricia Krauss, 482-5523

Webmaster
Joe Cramer, 292-7735
Assistant Webmaster (Vacant)

“It’s great to be alive – and to help others!”

To express interest in assisting Mended Hearts, clip out this form and mail to:
Mended Hearts
9190 Southmont Cove #103
Fort Myers, FL 33908

I am interested in these areas of service:
☐ Hospital Visitor
☐ Phone or Internet Visitor
☐ Assistant Webmaster
☐ Assistant Newsletter Editor

Name______________________________
Phone____________________________
November Guest Speaker — Marion Harris Barter

It was the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving, and we were pleased that 28 chapter members and guests attended our monthly meeting, despite the holiday. This was undoubtedly due to interest in the topic of Cardiac Rehab. Our speaker for the evening was Marion Harris-Barter, System Director for Cardiac Rehabilitation across Lee Health.

She began by talking statistics -- nationwide, only about 30% of eligible patients attend rehab. Here in our system, the attendance rate is in the high-40’s. Lee Health is expecting the numbers to go up, due to changes in Medicare and insurance companies that have been acknowledged by the cardiologist community at the national and local level.

Lee Health’s Cardiac Rehabilitation program works in three phases:

**Phase 1** begins while you are still in the hospital after surgery, by beginning limited physical activity, and hearing presentations on how lifestyle choices affect the heart.

**Phase 2** is a medically supervised outpatient program at either HealthPark Medical Center, Cape Coral Hospital, or soon in Estero at the new Coconut Point facility (see p. 10 of this newsletter). Phase 2 focuses on improving quality of life and reducing the risks associated with heart problems. It includes exercise, education and counseling. Patients are encouraged to begin the program within 2-4 weeks after discharge from the hospital.

**Phase 3** is independent exercise, under loose supervision, which take place at the Healthy Life Center-Fort Myers or Healthy Life Center-Cape Coral. Trained exercise specialists are available to assist and guide patients in their exercise.

Medicare and major insurance plans cover the cost of Phases 1 and 2 of cardiac rehab, because medical research studies have shown very positive outcomes for cardiac rehab patients.

Physician referral is required for cardiac rehab. In many cases, Lee Health is able to enroll the patient while they are still at the hospital; everything will then be set up before they go home.

Phase 2 Cardiac Rehab starts with a general session. At HealthPark, a member of our Mended Hearts chapter often kicks off the session. A new rehab group is started every week, usually with 10-15 outpatients. The minimum number of sessions is 20, with most doing 36 sessions. Patients’ hearts are monitored wirelessly by nurses during sessions. There is always a qualified physician immediately available to handle problems or emergencies. That’s why Lee Health rehab locations are located with hospitals. Rehab handles between 60 to 90 patients per week. 70% are surgical, with the rest non-surgical.

Marion discussed the great relationship that Mended Hearts has with Lee Health Cardiac Rehab and would like for us to do more, be more involved, especially around discharge time.

If you were unable to attend the November meeting, click on this link to learn more about Lee Health’s Cardiac Rehabilitation program – [http://www.leehealth.org/cardiaccare/treat/rehab.asp](http://www.leehealth.org/cardiaccare/treat/rehab.asp)
Will the New Apple Watch ECG App Help Improve Heart Health?

Apple Inc. recently introduced the fourth generation of their digital watch known, appropriately, as Apple Watch Series 4. Many people are raving about how the device can detect if you fall and will automatically contact emergency services. But, the most important feature of the watch (to us) has yet to be publicly offered for sale – a new electrical heart sensor that Apple promises will be capable of generating single-lead electrocardiograms.

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given approval to Apple’s ECG feature, and the president of the American Heart Association (AHA), Dr. Ivor Benjamin, was on stage when the ECG feature was announced at Apple headquarters. As noted on the AHA website, Dr. Benjamin stated at the time, “Capturing meaningful data about a person’s heart, in real time, is changing the way we practice medicine.”

Usually, an ECG requires several electrode patches to be stuck to a patient’s chest to get information on the electricity in his/her heart. The hope is that accessibility to this data through a watch will lead to a quicker diagnosis of atrial fibrillation (AFib), the irregular and often rapid heart rate that can increase a person’s risk of stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications. Untreated AFib doubles the risk of heart-related death and increases a person's chance of having a stroke fivefold.

As we understand it, a user launches the ECG app and follows on-screen instructions. Using electrodes in the watch face and a new electrical heart rate sensor in the back crystal, the app determines if the heart is beating normally or whether it detects signs of atrial fibrillation. Apple literature states that all recordings and any noted symptoms are stored and can generate a file to be shared with health care experts.

Apple isn’t the first and only company to develop such a device. You might remember, at our May 2018 meeting, Dr. Larry Antonucci, Lee Health President & CEO, displayed a new device, called the KardiaMobile. He praised it as an exciting example of leading edge technology becoming available on the market. The device could display an ECG in 30 seconds anywhere, anytime.

We can’t wait to test the new Apple Watch ECG device and any others that will undoubtedly arrive on market soon. We’re sure there’s a lot of testing being done before release to try to minimize the number of false warnings leading to unnecessary visits to cardiologists’ offices. Likewise, only time will tell whether alerts from these devices and watches will help people live longer healthier lives.
Please Join Us for the Annual Mended Hearts Holiday Luncheon

**Wednesday, December 19, 2018 – 11:30 a.m.**

**Il Pomodoro Italian Restaurant**

9681 Gladiolus Dr, Fort Myers, FL 33908

$20.00 per person
Includes choice of entree, non-alcoholic drink, tax & tip

Reservations must be made by December 17th
Contact Joe Jansen: 239-461-0980
Or send your check to Joe at:
9190 Southmont Cove #103, Ft. Myers 33908
Visiting Report – Oct. 2018

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Welcome our New Member

Mended Hearts of Fort Myers is happy to welcome the following new member:

Irwin Bosworth
Alva 33920

❖ New Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans on November 12, 2018. The previous guidelines were published back in 2008, and the updates incorporated in this edition are based on medical and scientific evidence collected over the past 10 years. The guidelines are lengthy and provide information and guidance on the types and amounts of physical activity that provide substantial health benefits. Here are a few of the key takeaways:

- The guidelines no longer suggest a minimum of 10-minute periods of physical activity for it to be beneficial. Recommendations now emphasize that moving more and sitting less will benefit nearly everyone. Being physically active is one of the most important actions individuals can engage in to improve their health.

- **Children** Those between the ages of 3 and 5 years should be physically active throughout the day. Those between 6 and 17 years of age should do 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily in equal portions of aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activity.

- **Adults** should do at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity each week, or some combination. It’s best when this activity is spread throughout the week, and adults should include muscle-strengthening activity of moderate or greater intensity that involves all major muscle groups on two or more days a week.

- **Pregnant women**, or those who have recently given birth, should still engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week, with consultation from their health care providers.

- **Adults with chronic conditions and disabilities** should still engage in the recommended amount of physical activity if they can do so.

- **Older adults** should still adhere to the regimen prescribed for all adults, but they should also do multi-component physical activity. In particular, they should perform exercises that include balance training to reduce their risk of falls.

- Physical activity has immediate health benefits … a single episode of physical activity can reduce anxiety and blood pressure, improve quality of sleep, and insulin sensitivity. Regular physical activity over months and years can produce long-term health benefits, and exactly 20 specific health benefits for adults are listed in the guidelines.

For more information about the latest Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans visit [www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines).
HAVE YOU HAD A HEART PROCEDURE AND FEEL GRATEFUL FOR YOUR RECOVERY?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP OTHERS FACING THE FUTURE WITH HEART DISEASE?

If this describes you, then consider volunteering as a hospital visitor, or even serve as a substitute visitor.

You can volunteer with us as little or as much as fits your schedule. Contact any of our chapter officers shown on page 2 of this newsletter.

We will be happy to answer your questions and, if you decide to become a visitor, we will personally guide you through the training period.

- VISITING HELPS PATIENTS (AND THE VISITOR)
- VISITING IMPROVES OUTCOMES FOR PATIENTS
- VISITING IMPACTS HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE FOR PATIENTS
Many of our home medicine cabinets are filled with prescription medications – some of which are no longer needed. These expired, unwanted, or unused medicines should be disposed of promptly to reduce the chance that others in the home accidently take, or intentionally misuse the meds. But, what should we do with those orange or opaque bottles filled with leftover meds?

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)’s 2016 National Survey revealed that 6.2 million Americans misused controlled prescription drugs. A majority of these drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet. Sometimes this is deliberate, but the scary part is that children mistakenly consume these medications, and the results can be fatal. Get these drugs out of your house, if they’re not necessary for your health. There are several alternatives to do that.

The best choice is to safely dispose of the medications at either a scheduled “take-back event” or at a year-round law enforcement office. The Lee County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) has a secure and anonymous Disposal Drop Box for unused or expired medications (both prescription and non-prescription) at each of their substation offices. We understand that all medications received are incinerated. Photo to right shows a Drop Box.

The nearest LCSO site to Health Park Medical Center is at their West District Substation, 15650 Pine Ridge Rd, Fort Myers, FL 33908. Medications can be brought in 7:30 – 5:00, Monday through Friday. You can find other LCSO Drop Box locations on their website –

http://www.sheriffleefl.org/how_do_i/request_general_services/safely_discard_prescription_medications.php

If it’s not possible to visit an LCSO office, tossing unwanted prescription drugs into the trash might be a viable option, if you make them unattractive to others. One solution we often see recommended is to remove the drugs from their original containers and mix them with something undesirable, such as kitty litter, dirt, or coffee grounds to make it appear inedible. Put the mixture in a sealable container (such as a resealable plastic bag). Pour liquid into the container to make it even nastier and more unappetizing looking. Then seal the container again with strong tape, making sure the contents can’t leak out. Throw the container in the trash.

Last resort is to flush certain potentially dangerous meds down the toilet. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has a “Flush List” of 15 medications that are harmful and, in some cases, fatal with just one dose if they are used by someone other than the person for whom they were prescribed. None of us should want these being ingested by children or family pets. Find the FDA list here –

https://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucm186187.htm
LET’S SCAN THE JOURNALS

❖ Xofluza, a new Flu Treatment, Approved by FDA

On October 24, 2018, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced approval of Xofluza (baloxavir marboxil), a new treatment for (as FDA worded it) “acute uncomplicated influenza (flu) in patients 12 years of age and older who have been symptomatic for no more than 48 hours.”

There is already an effective flu treatment, named Tamiflu, and there isn’t much difference in effectiveness between the two -- they reduce symptoms within about the same amount of time and the same success. But the new medication, Xofluza, is “single dose” – one pill taken once within the 24 – 48 hours of onset (sooner the better). Whereas, Tamiflu typically requires 2 doses each day for 5 days. Either of the two meds will reduce severity of symptoms about one day sooner than placebo, as shown in two clinical trials. Both are prescription medications. The FDA stated that it’s good having two treatment options that work in different ways to attack the virus, because flu viruses can become resistant to specific antiviral drugs.

These medication treatments should not replace getting the flu vaccine before the flu season. The flu vaccine is still the best thing you can do to prevent the flu and any problems that may arise from the disease that killed around 80,000 people last flu season.

❖ New Drug Study Shows Great Promise but May Need to be Repeated

A highly anticipated presentation at the American Heart Association’s Scientific Sessions, (November 10, 2018 in Chicago) showed very impressive results for a new medication that seemed to dramatically reduce cardiovascular risks. Published comments varied -- some very positive and others were concerned with a perceived mistake in strategy for the clinical test (REDUCE-IT) that might mean more research is needed to correct the results.

The study featured Vascepa capsules, which contain high amounts of a purified, prescription fish oil. Vascepa was approved by the FDA in July 2012 for “the reduction of Triglyceride levels in adult patients with Severe Hypertriglyceridemia.” The study, funded by Amarin Pharma (Vascepa’s manufacturer), tested 8,000 patients with elevated triglycerides and a greater risk of heart problems for various reasons. All were already taking a statin to lower LDL cholesterol. Half were given 4 grams of Vascepa and the rest were given 4 grams of a placebo consisting of mineral oil capsules.

After a little less than five years, about 17% of those on Vascepa had suffered one of these problems — a heart attack, stroke, heart-related death or clogged arteries requiring medical care — versus 22% of those on the placebo. That was considered a 25% reduction in risk by taking the Vascepa capsules on top of statin risk reduction. Researchers also reported a 24% reduction in cardiovascular death, nonfatal heart attack and nonfatal stroke 11.2% vs. 14.8%.

The strategic “mistake” that bothered many scientists and researchers was that the mineral oil used for the comparison group, may not have been a true placebo. Their claim is that mineral oil interferes with statin drugs, raises cholesterol, and might have caused some heart problems or strokes, making the comparison group look worse, resulting in Vascepa looking better. Others believe that the study proved that the medicine works. They say the objections most likely relate to the magnitude of the result. It’s not that the risk reduction would completely disappear.
❖ A Visit to Lee Health – Coconut Point

Your editor recently took advantage of an open house at Lee Health’s newest medical facility in Estero, nearby to Coconut Point Mall (official address: 23450 Via Coconut Point, Estero, FL 34135) to look around. My impression – Wow! This is a large, beautiful, modern facility, with brand new, state-of-the-art medical equipment, the latest in technology, and well-thought-out floor plans.

The building itself is 163,000 square feet, on two floors, and contains outpatient acute medical care, emergency department, and a large, comprehensive health and wellness component. Lee Physician Group has 50 exam rooms and two procedure rooms. There are currently four surgical operating rooms, with 23 patient bays for pre-operative and post-operative services that can support up to eight operating rooms. Imaging services include X-Ray, MRI, CT Scan, ultrasound, bone density scans, and mammography.

The physical rehab center is impressive. In addition to the standard physical rehab equipment, there is an anti-gravity treadmill and a ZeroG Gait and Balance System (shown to the left).

The Cardiac Rehab setup (shown to the right) is equally first-rate and modern. We spoke for a few minutes with some of the cardiac rehab staff, who have worked at Health Park, and were thankful for the Mended Hearts visitors who stop by periodically to encourage their patients and stress the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

The Healthy Lifestyle Center even has a cooking demonstration area. For Health and Wellness in South Lee County, this is a wonderful addition to the community.
Fun Activities Page

Fa-la-la-la-la

Cross out all of the words on the list. The remaining letters spell out a special Christmas message.

Bells
Candy Canes
Cards
Cedar
Cold
Gifts
Lights
Noel
Party
Pie
Pine
Sales
Sauce
Sled
Star
Stocking
Toys
Tree
Wreath
Yule
### Upcoming Meeting Schedule and Guest Speakers

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<td>Dec 19, 2018</td>
<td>Holiday Luncheon – il Pomodoro Restaurant</td>
<td>Holiday Luncheon</td>
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<td>Jan 16, 2019</td>
<td>Scott Kashman – Chief, Acute Care</td>
<td>Scott Kashman – Chief, Acute Care</td>
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<td>Feb 20, 2019</td>
<td>Paul DiGiorgi – Cardio-thoracic Surgery</td>
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Jan. & Feb. meetings – HealthPark Medical Center in Sanibel-Captiva Room, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Dec. Holiday Luncheon – See details on page 5

### Procedure for Monthly Meetings

Lee Health prepares complimentary heart-healthy meals for our meetings, available beginning at 5:45 p.m. (45 minutes before the meeting). If you plan to join us for the meal, notify Joe Jansen at jfjansen@aol.com or 461-0980 – at least five days in advance.

You are always invited to attend the 6:30 meeting without advance notice.

### Our Chapter Website -- [mendedheartsftmyers.org](http://mendedheartsftmyers.org)

Joe Cramer, our WebMaster (and Chairman of Visitor Scheduling), has developed a marvelous website for all of us who are concerned about heart disease in Fort Myers.

Follow the Internet link shown above and note many areas of interest are easily accessible. Make a test run and see what you think. Spend 15 minutes or so, and check out every tab.

- Home
- Chapter Activities
- Current Newsletter
- Meetings & Location
- Links to Heart Info
- Membership Form
- Officers
- Testimonies
- Chapter History
### Member Information (please print or type)

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| City | Retired: ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| State/Zip | Occupation |
| Email address | Preferred Contact: ☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Mail |
| Family member (must reside at same address; please name): (Mr/Mrs/Ms) | |
| Family member Email address | |
| May Mended Hearts staff or volunteers contact you regarding local chapter opportunities? ☐ Yes ☐ No |

### Medical Info/Demographics (Optional for Mended Hearts reporting purposes in aggregate only)

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Many chapter newsletters include surgery/procedure anniversaries of members. Please indicate here if you are agreeable to having your name published in this way.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Add my email to monthly national email updates?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Add my email to monthly national email updates?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Optional info: Date of birth

Race: ☐ Caucasian; ☐ Black; ☐ Asian; ☐ Am. Indian; ☐ Other

Gender: ☐ Male; ☐ Female

### National Membership Dues:

Includes subscription to *Heartbeat* magazine and one insignia pin for an individual or two pins for a family membership (must reside in same household). Select type of membership and include chapter dues (unless you wish to become a member-at-large). National dues are tax deductible less $10.00; Chapter and Lifetime dues are 100% tax deductible.

**Within United States**

| Individual | $35.00 | ☐ |
| Family | $50.00 | ☐ |
| Life – Individual Dues | $210.00 | ☐ |
| Life – Family Dues | $290.00 | ☐ |

A tax-deductible contribution $_____ to ☐ National OR ☐ Chapter

Dues Summary: National dues $_____ 

TOTAL $_____

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**New chapter members: Please send payment with enrollment form to Chapter 312 Treasurer:**

Or, if joining as a member-at-large, send to:

The Mended Hearts, Inc.
National Resource Center
1500 Dawson Road
Albany, GA 31707

Treasurer Name: Mary McGhee
9171 Cherry Hill Court
Fort Myers, FL 33908
ABOUT MENDED HEARTS

We are an international volunteer organization dedicated to helping heart patients and their families. Our trained volunteers visit patients, with doctor’s approval, while you are hospitalized. We provide literature on heart disease and your recovery from surgery.

OUR MISSION is dedicated to Inspiring hope and improving the quality of life for heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support.

OUR PURPOSE is to offer help, support and encouragement to heart patients and their families.

OUR METHOD is to partner with medical and hospital staff to help the patient have a positive experience. Everyone who has had a heart procedure and their families are welcome at our meetings. You don’t have to join Mended Hearts to hear our speakers, but we would love it if you do join. We will send you the next three issues of our chapter newsletter following your surgery.