I hope everyone had a wonderful fourth of July holiday. During the month of May, Mended Hearts Inc sponsored a webinar series on Mental Health and Cardiovascular Disease. Our speaker, Dr. Adrienne Ward shared very important tips for dealing with some of the issues affecting heart patients. Some are included in this newsletter. For more information on the challenges heart patients face after a heart event and how they can affect your mental health, go to https://youtu.be/MqhOdbaqNFM.

The month of June was hot and dry in Huntsville. Huntsville Mended Hearts Chapter 260 did not meet in June because of vacations and the Mended Hearts leadership meeting which took place June 25-June 27. This was a busy month for visiting at the Huntsville Hospital. We were able to visit most of the patients who had a heart procedure and most of them received a pillow from our chapter. The hospital has served a lot of patients and it has been a struggle to keep enough pillows for them. We are almost out of the material which was left over from the Senior Horizons group that was producing them for us. Fabric has been purchased, but now it must be cut and taken to the printers. Several volunteers have been sewing them for us. As we continue, we will need more volunteers to help with this project. Give me a call at 870.816.0462 or 256.585.2244 if you can help with cutting material or sewing the pillows.

I am looking forward to being able to have our meetings in person again. In the meantime, mark your calendars for Thursday, July 21, 6:30 P.M. when we will have our chapter zoom meeting. Our membership drive continues through August to add an additional 71 new and/or renewal members. Please see the membership form with this newsletter for additional information about mailing or calling to renew dues. Dues are mailed to MHI in Albany, GA and not to the Huntsville Hospital Volunteer Office. Continue to eat healthy, get some exercise when you can and drink plenty of water when walking outside.

Lindell Smith, Chapter President
Coping with Heart Disease

The way you cope with your feelings about having heart disease is an important part of your recovery. Coping is a response trying to prevent, avoid, or control stress. People respond to heart disease in many different ways. What works best for you may not work for someone else.

Although people are different, many have similar feelings about having heart disease. Some common feelings are denial, anxiety, depression, fear of being over-protected by family and fear of becoming an invalid. There is no reason to be afraid of having these feelings. These feelings usually do not last and by knowing about them you will be able to cope. It is important to recognize these feelings and their causes. Talk to your doctor, family, and friends about your feelings.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal reaction to a scary, or unknown situation. You may feel tense, nervous, or irritable. These feelings usually come from not knowing what to expect during your recovery, or how you will adjust at home or what your life will be like. It is a good idea to talk about your feelings with the people around you. Keep in mind that your family may be afraid. Talking together can be helpful. Various techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness provide immediate relief from the symptoms of anxiety. Dr. Ward recommended deep breathing as one way example of a coping skill for anxiety. Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose. Hold the air in your lungs and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow. Time the inhalation (4s) pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3—5 minutes.

Denial

Denial is when you think this cannot happen to me. Denial is a common reaction because having heart disease can be overwhelming. Denial temporarily helps to protect you from a stressful situation. Often, treatment for heart disease is not a cure for your disease, but it may help control your heart problem. Some changes in your life-style must be made to prevent problems in the future. If you cannot accept your heart disease over time, you should seek counseling.

Depression

Feeling sad, lonely, or angry are common feelings with heart disease. These are signs of depression. Depression may result out of boredom or inaction. Weakness can result from inactivity and this may lead you to feel that you are not recovering fast enough. As a result you become more inactive, and therefore weaker.

Many people become depressed after they go home. A good way to deal with the depression is to remain active. You may worry that you cannot return to your normal activities. Your strength and activity will return as you recover. Take one day at a time and set small progressive goals for yourself. Focus on what you can do, not what you cannot do.

Go to Depression_rev_v4 (mendedhearts.org) to download the excellent discussion guide on Depression and Heart Disease.

Role of Family Members or Friends

Family members may also become anxious and depressed if they do not understand your heart disease or what to expect during recovery. This is why your family needs to become involved in your recovery. Let them know what is going on, and what to expect in the future. Your family and friends can help support you if they understand. Talk to your family about changes in responsibilities such as money, chores, childcare and roles. It is better to talk about problems and solutions than to worry about problems, and not share them with your family.
You'll want to get **more** shade and **less** sun if you are taking the following drugs: Some drugs magnify the harmful effects of the sun. According to Harvard Health Letter, you should check with your doctor to make sure the medications you are taking are sun safe.

- **Antibiotics.** Ciprofloxacin (Cipro, ProQuin), doxycycline (Oracea, Vibramycin), sulfamethoxazole (Bactrim, Gantanol, Septra) or tetracycline (Achromycin).

- **Cancer drugs that increase sun sensitivity:** They include 5-fluorouracil (Carac, Efudex, Fluoroplex), dacarbazine (DTIC-Dome) and vemurafenib (Zelboraf).

- **Decongestants and older antihistamines.** Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed), phenylephrine (Sudafed PE) and diphenhydramine (Benadryl). Try fexofenadine (Allegra) or loratadine (Claritin).

- **Diabetes medications.** Chlorpropamide (Diabinese) and glyburide (DiaBeta, Glynase, Micronase).

- **Diuretics.** Furosemide (Lasix) and hydrochlorothiazide (Microzide Cardiovascular medications. Amiodarone (Cordarone), for serious heart rhythm disturbances, and the blood pressure drugs diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor, Tiazac) and nifedipine (Procardia).

- **Pain relievers.** Ibuprofen (Motrin), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), celecoxib (Celebrex) and piroxicam (Feldene) increase the chances of a serious sunburn. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) doesn’t.

- **Psychiatric drugs.** Chlorpromazine (Thorazine), desipramine (Norpramin), imipramine (Tofranil) and other anti-anxiety and antidepressant drugs can inhibit the body’s ability to sweat.

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**Protect your heart in the heat**

Summertime heat brings with it special considerations for those with heart conditions, and it's especially important to stay hydrated and as cool as possible during these dog days.

For every degree your body's temperature rises, your heart beats 10 BPM faster, according to Harvard Health. While a study published in 2014 said most cases of atrial fibrillation tend to occur in the winter, those with irregular heartbeats should take special precautions in the summer as well -- higher temperatures can trigger AFib as your heart works harder to regulate itself.

Here are some ways to alleviate that stress:

* **Stay hydrated.** Dehydration is one trigger for atrial fibrillation, not to mention stroke.
* **Avoid going outside between about noon and 3 p.m.**
* **Get in air conditioning.** A fan is of little use if it's circulating 95-degree air.
* **Reduce caffeine and alcohol, as these can cause dehydration.**
* **Avoid exercising in the heat.**
* **Take a cool shower and put an ice pack under your arm or near the groin.**
* **Wear well-ventilated shoes.**
* **Take breaks.** Schedule in more breaks than you normally would in order to conserve energy and prevent overheating.
We recognize member birthdays and surgery dates referred to as Mendiversaries. Congratulations to everyone who is celebrating a heart procedure anniversary this month. If we have your month listed incorrectly or you would prefer not to be listed, please notify the chapter president. If we are missing your celebration, let me know at 256.837.7354.

July Birthdays
Charlotte Bailes
Marty Burke
Harriett Littlepage
Charlene Neely

July Mendiversaries
Donnie Baldwin
Karen Cloe
Lorenzo Jones
Beth Magie
Toccaro Simpson
Fredonia Williams

Hope you’re feeling better!
Barbara Morris
Donnette Smith

Mended Hearts 260 membership drive. Help us reach a goal of 71 membership renewals or new members (1 membership for each year of Mended Hearts.) Mended Hearts began in 1951.

Renew Your Mended Hearts membership or join us.
National dues individual $20; family $40
No local dues as chapter receives 25% of national dues paid

To renew over the phone, please call 888-432-7899 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET.

To renew through the mail, print off and fill out the membership form found in this newsletter. It can be mailed to the address for the Mended Hearts Resource Center found on the form.

♦ Please do not mail to Huntsville Hospital Volunteer Office.

About Mended Hearts: “Mended Hearts is a national and community-based non-profit organization that has been offering the gift of hope to heart disease patients, their families and caregivers. To offer this hope Mended Hearts provides a variety of programs.”

Mended Hearts Mission Statement: “To inspire hope and improve the quality of life of heart patients and their families through on-going peer-to-peer support, education, and advocacy.”

Vision Statement: “To be the premier nationwide resource and peer-to-peer support network for all heart patients and families affected by Heart Disease across the life span.”
Effective January 1, 2021, the Resource Center will process all new memberships (all levels) and all membership renewals.

All chapters will be reimbursed 25% of all paid national dues or renewals of dues.