

TICKER TOPICS

MENDED HEARTS OF SOUTHERN OREGON – CHAPTER 137

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2017



IN MEMORIAM – BETTY SHAVE

Betty Joy Shave joined Mended Hearts of Southern Oregon in March, 2003 after her valve surgery in 2002. She was a faithful member who attended most meetings. In the last couple of years she attended when her professional caregiver was able to bring her.

Betty was born on August 8, 1930 and passed away on November 4, 2016. Several of us attended her Memorial Service at Westminster Presbyterian Church on December 1st. Mended Hearts was mentioned as an organization she loved to attend.

We will miss Betty's smiling face and stories at our meetings.

ELECTIONS AND VISITOR REACCRDITATION IN JANUARY

In addition to our bi-annual national and chapter elections on Tuesday, January 17th in the Smullin Center at RRM, June Squires will come by to tell us about a new visiting opportunity she has arranged. We will be able to visit TAVR (transcatheter aortic valve replacement) patients this year.

June will let our Visitors know when and where we can make these visits and how the information will be given to our Visitors.

Since TAVR's are only approved for medium and high risk patients, the people we visit will have other things going on.

Reaccreditation will be somewhat different than in the past because of our new relationship as Volunteers.

OUR NEW PROGRAM CHAIR HAS SOME WONDERFUL GUEST LINED UP

Michelle Christensen has really jumped in with both feet. In addition to being a Visitor, she manages our Facebook presence and is now our Program Chair.

In February, she has lined up Beth Coker, Managers of Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab at RRM. Beth always gives us great information about lifestyle changes and life with heart disease.

In March, Dr. Miruais Hamed will be our guest. Dr. Hamed is a general and invasive cardiologist with Southern Oregon Cardiology. He is particularly interested in how to prevent heart problems and we will ask him about life after stents and/or surgery.

In April, June Squires has arranged for Dr. Junyang Lou, a Southern Oregon Cardiology physician, to talk about TAVRs, answer questions and, in addition, talk about some ground breaking procedures he has brought to RRM such as new ways to seal holes in one's heart.

I hope you can join us for these important educational opportunities.

NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

In November we had our quarterly roundtables. Since the group was very small, we went round the room and answered the question "How did heart surgery affect you as a patient or caregiver?"

The answers were interesting. Of course, changes in diet and exercise was a common response.

Several were surprised and amazed that friends had had surgery. They said that they had no idea until they talked about their experience. Also, most had no indication that a problem existed. They talked about the need to be proactive with one's doctor after you are told "it's not your heart".

The roundtable was great. I hope that more will participate in the future.

In December we had 2 events:



On Saturday, December 3rd, we had our annual holiday luncheon at Punky's Diner. The food was good and the gathering was a lot of fun. We enjoyed a couple of members we hadn't seen lately.

On December 20th, we had a short Board meeting to put a slate of suggested officers together for the January meeting and to discuss a couple of other issues.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Even if being an Accredited Visitor isn't what you'd like to do, other volunteer opportunities abound at RRM. Beyond just giving back, there are a number of perks when you are a Volunteer.

Michelle Christensen is the Lead for the CCU desk. If you or your spouse had heart surgery at RRM, a volunteer at the CCU desk probably was on hand. 5 of us are volunteering on the CCU desk and Michelle has other openings.

A couple of members have told me, in the last few months that they have time on their hands. Here's a terrific way to fill a great need and have

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Visit us at: www.mendedhearts137.org

And check out our Facebook Page:

Facebook.com/Mended Hearts of Southern Oregon

fun in the process.

Other Volunteer Services need help, as well. Contact the Volunteer Office at volunteer@asante.org or 541-789-5875.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I'm looking forward to great strides in 2017. We are now fully partnering with RRMC's Volunteer Organization. 5 of our members now volunteer at the CCU desk in addition to those who are Visitors. I hope more of our members decide to give back to RRMC by volunteering. There's the CCU desk, being a guide (which as a part of one's duties allows us to meet heart surgery patients and show them and their families the layout of RRMC), short stay desk, the North and South lobby information desks and more.

We will soon be visiting TAVR patients and their families. It will give us the opportunity to recruit TAVR patients and, hopefully, get them interested in visiting other TAVR patients. That way we can continue our goal of visitors "who have been there".

With some new, active members such as the Christensen's, things are looking up this year. Your participation will help the momentum grow.

I'm very interested in getting a "Young Mended Hearts" group going. They would be members with kids and who are still working who aren't as able to attend our regular meetings because of family obligations, but can help us put fun social events together.

Finally, we will make a big push to see if we can get a Mended Little Hearts group together. I hope, like the Spokane Chapter, we hope to work together to make both groups stronger.

Working on the CCU desk, we already have the contact information for an interested nurse who has a child with a congenital heart defect. The

nurse just stopped by the CCU desk and started chatting. When told that we were going to try to start a Mended Little Hearts group we were given the contact information. We plan to have an informational meeting to attract interested families in February or March. At the meeting we hope to get a couple of families interested in getting things going. We know there are CHD patients in the valley.

Finally, your Executive Committee approved the 2017 budget which authorized us to donate \$250 each to Cardiac Rehab and Mended Hearts Inc. We will also subsidize a member to go to the conference in Nashville in June up to \$500. The conferences provide great education and the chance to see what other chapters are doing.

I hope I will see you often this year for some valuable education, a chance to be supported and share and to be revitalized in the knowledge that life can be rich even with heart disease.

THERE'S A NEW DRUG THAT WILL REVERSE PLAQUE IN HEART PATIENT'S ARTERIES

In October, 2014, 2 pharmacists from Asanta's Rogue Valley RX Pharmacy gave us information on 2 new drugs for controlling LDL (bad cholesterol). The 2 are Praluent and Repatha. We have new information on Repatha.

There is a lot of hope in Amgen's Repatha and other PCSK9 drugs. PCSK9 stands for proprotein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9 inhibitor. They were approved by the FDA last year. Use of the drug has been slow because of the cost and because statins work well for most patients. Insurance coverage has also been a problem.

We heard about the success of statins at several of our educational events. Not everyone can tolerate statins. For those who can't there hasn't been an alternative up to now.

According to an article in the Washington Post, the first significant trials for PCSK9 were presented at a November 15th meeting of the American Heart Assoc.

The study involved 968 patients who have coronary disease and are already taking statins. They either got PCSK9 or a placebo for 76 weeks. The patients who received PCSK9 not only had very low LDL it also reduced the plaque in their coronary arteries.

It's hard to say what effect the drug will have on people taking statins to reduce high LDL. Also, the study only looked at plaque and did not look at other characteristics of coronary artery disease.

A study of 27,500 patients at high risk is expected to be released this year. If it supports the finding that plaque in arteries is actually reduced, that will be a game changer. No more heading to the cathlab for stents or the OR for bypass?

We will report on this and other advances in treatment and drugs as the information become available. Later this year we should have a pharmacist talk to us about this and the other 3 new drugs we heard about earlier in the year (Praluent and Corlanor which is a heart failure prevention drug).

BE CAREFUL OF HOSPITAL STAYS FOR OBSERVATION

In an article from Mended Hearts Inc. we find a hospital truth: If you are in the hospital under observation, you aren't under Medicare. There is an assortment of reasons that you could stay at a hospital overnight and still not be covered under Medicare Part A.

According to Medicare.gov, suppose you go to the Emergency Room and the doctor sends you to the Intensive Care Unit so that you can be monitored closely. You stay the night, get better and go home the next day. That's not covered under Medicare Part A. Your doctor's services will be covered

under Medicare Part B, but not your hospital expenses.

Why? You haven't been admitted, you have just been observed. Thus, you are an outpatient. Even if you stay for two days, the full two days may not be covered if you stay in the hospital. You must be admitted both days to have inpatient status. If one day is for observation, Medicare Part A will not pay. Medical Part B will pay for your doctor's services.

Outpatient surgery can sometimes result in a night in the hospital if, for example, your blood pressure is high. But if the doctor hasn't specifically written an order to admit you, then Medicare Part A still classifies you as an outpatient and will not pay. Medicare Part B will pay for doctor and out-patient tests but not the bed.

As with all of your medical care, you must be proactive and ask questions. It's no fun to get a hospital bill you didn't expect. Whether you are on Medicare or not, ask questions about all of your care, medications, etc.

While on the subject of being proactive, be sure to ask your doctor or pharmacist before you take over the counter medications if you are also taking prescription medications.

VISITING REPORT

November: Mended Hearts visitors made 42 visits to 36 patients. Visitors were Kellie Hill, John Refsnider, Michelle and Duane Christiansen, and George Brown.

Facebook.com/Mended Hearts of Southern Oregon

