



# THE IMPACT OF PHILANTHROPY ON HEART & VASCULAR SERVICES

# Leadership Message

## Dear Friends,

Heart disease continues to impact countless lives, and at Bon Secours, advancing cardiac care remains a top priority. Through investments in cutting-edge treatments, expanded access to cardiovascular services and innovative technology, we are strengthening the care we provide to our community. Our partnership with the Foundation is critical in bridging funding gaps and being able to deliver exceptional cardiovascular care.

Recent investments and advancements include:

- Groundbreaking of the St. Mary's Hospital Critical Care Tower
- Opening a newly renovated electrophysiology (EP) lab at St. Francis Medical Center, featuring advanced technology to treat atrial fibrillation (AFib), including pulse field ablation
- Expanded access to advanced cardiac imaging, including CT and MRI
- Renovations and upgrades of three cardiac catheterization labs
- Implementation of Viz.ai across Richmond hospitals to enhance rapid triage and care coordination during cardiovascular emergencies

Beyond infrastructure and technology, we remain deeply committed to investing in people. We continue to strategically hire compassionate caregivers across the full spectrum of cardiac care—from technicians and nurses to advanced practice clinicians and physicians—to foster a supportive healthcare environment that technology alone can never replace.

Donor support is essential to driving these advancements. Your generosity empowers us to invest in breakthrough treatments, lifesaving innovations, and the caregivers who bring them to life every day. Thank you for being part of our Mission.

Sincerely,



*Mark Bladergroen, MD*

**Mark Bladergroen, MD**  
Executive Medical Director  
Bon Secours Heart & Vascular Institute



*Ann S. Carpin*

**Ann S. Carpin**  
President  
Bon Secours Richmond Foundation

## Advancing Patient Care Through Education

Thanks to donor support, our electrophysiology (EP) team attended the 2025 Heart Rhythm Society Annual Conference, gaining leading-edge insights to improve care for patients with atrial fibrillation (AFib)—a condition expected to affect 12 million people by 2030.

The experience reinforced the importance of frequent, personalized patient communication, clear education, and simple action plans that reduce anxiety and improve outcomes.

The team is already applying these learnings across Bon Secours Cardiology through:

- Enhanced patient education materials on AFib, treatment options, and stroke prevention
- Clear action plans to guide patients on what to do when symptoms change
- Follow-up calls within 1-2 days after procedures to support recovery and medication management
- Development of new education tools for device patients and a future EP support group

Philanthropic support makes opportunities like this possible—bringing the latest knowledge directly to the bedside and improving care, outcomes, and patient confidence.

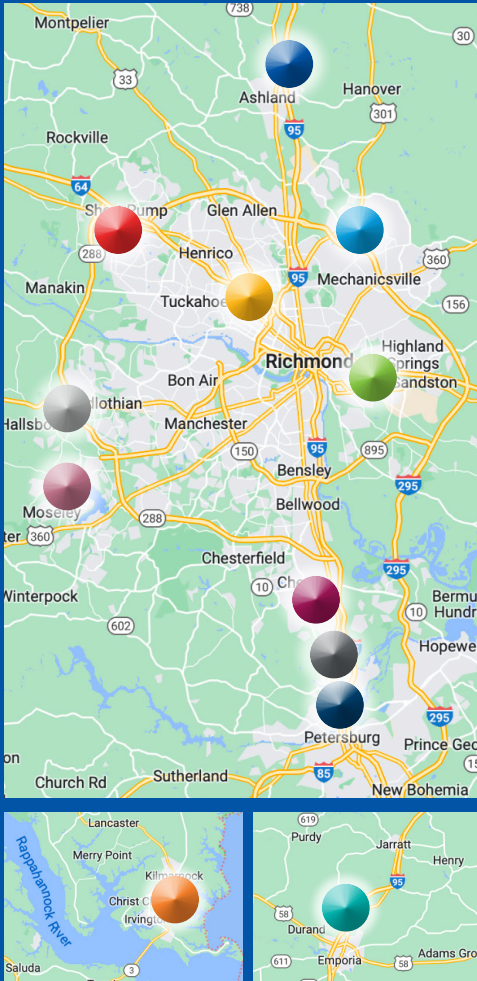


From left: Kristina Kierl, NP; Lauren Agee, MSN, RN; Sarah Good, RN; Brittany Ash, NP;

# Exceptional Care Close to Home

The Bon Secours Richmond Heart & Vascular Institute is committed to delivering world-class cardiac care to the people of central and southern Virginia. We provide integrated cardiovascular services focused on quality, growth, market standardization, and innovation.

Led by physician teams dedicated to patient-centered care, our expertise spans non-invasive cardiology, advanced heart failure, structural heart disease, cardiac surgery, electrophysiology, advanced imaging, interventional cardiology, vascular surgery and mechanical circulatory support. Your support strengthens our ability to bring exceptional care to the communities we serve.



## Exceptional Care close to Home

- St. Mary's Hospital
- Memorial Regional Medical Center
- Rappahannock General Hospital
- Richmond Community Hospital
- St. Francis Medical Center
- Southside Medical Center
- Southern Virginia Medical Center

### Freestanding Emergency Departments:

- Short Pump Emergency Center
- Westchester Emergency Center
- Chester Emergency Center
- Colonial Heights Emergency Center
- Ashland Emergency Center

## 2025 By The Numbers

**82** Surgical Valve Procedures

**338** Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG)

**6,379** Cardiac Cath Procedures

**3,263** Electrophysiology (EP)

**12** Hybrid Ablation Procedures

**177** Structural Heart Procedures

**60** Advanced Mechanical Circulatory Support

## Recognized for Quality Care:

- St. Mary's Hospital was selected as one of only 40 hospitals nationwide for the IMPLEMENT-EF Heart Failure initiative, a national American Heart Association program focused on improving inpatient heart failure care.
- Memorial Regional Medical Center earned its first 3-star rating from The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), the highest recognition for excellence in cardiothoracic surgery and patient outcomes.



## Heart Funds in Action:

- The Heart Care Fund provides blood pressure cuffs and scales to patients in need, helping them monitor their condition at home, improve clinical recommendations, and reduce hospitalizations.
- The Cardiac Care Fund for Nursing Education supports staff attendance at national conferences, advancing knowledge in cardiovascular care and improving patient outcomes.
- Heart Funds also supported the purchase of a point-of-care testing device for immediate anticoagulation results, as well as advanced stent systems for patients with complex ischemic heart disease.

# Stories from the Heart

## BLACKSTONE RESIDENT MIKE TUCKER CREDITS BON SECOURS FOR LIFESAVING CARE

In the spring of 2025, rural Virginia resident, Mike Tucker, visited Bon Secours Blackstone Primary Care expecting a routine checkup and a refill for his high blood pressure medication. Instead, Dr. Dennis Swan referred him to Allison Longest, NP who ordered cardiac testing which revealed a life-threatening aortic aneurysm that had gone undetected for years.

Allison quickly referred Mike to cardiac surgeon Dr. Brody Wehman at Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center. Within two days of initial appointment, Mike underwent emergency surgery to remove the aneurysm, replace his ascending aorta, and complete an unexpected coronary bypass.

Mike credits the coordinated efforts of the Bon Secours primary care, cardiology, and cardiac surgery teams with saving his life. His story highlights the importance of rural access to comprehensive healthcare. "They saved my life... every member of the care team, including the technicians, the nurses, everyone, were right there with me throughout the entire ordeal. In rural areas like this, having a provider like Bon Secours is important because it allows greater access to and quality of healthcare services, without having to drive too far."



Mike Tucker and Brody Wehman, MD

## Advanced Cardiac Imaging



Vikas Rathi, MD

Bon Secours has been a leader in advanced cardiac imaging in Central Virginia since launching the program in 2010 under the direction of Dr. Vikas Rathi. At that time, it was the only system in the region offering comprehensive cardiac MRI and CT—setting a strong foundation for continued growth and innovation.

That growth has accelerated in recent years. From 2023 to 2025, cardiac MRI volume increased by 20%, while cardiac CT grew by 120%—a reflection of rising demand and our commitment to delivering high-quality imaging for patients and referring providers.

Looking ahead, Bon Secours is building this momentum with plans for a dedicated Advanced Cardiac Imaging Center at Reynolds Crossing, expected to open in the third quarter of 2026. This investment will expand access, enhance efficiency, and elevate patient experience.

The new center will feature leading-edge technology, including the Siemens NAEOTOM Alpha® photon-counting CT platform, along with advanced AI tools for coronary CTA analysis. Together, these advancements will further strengthen diagnostic precision and clinical insight—ensuring patients to receive the most accurate, comprehensive care possible.

## Strengthening Cardiac Care in Blackstone

As part of the partnership between the Heart & Vascular Institute and Blackstone Family Practice, Allison Longest, NP, plays a critical role in evaluating heart patients directly within the rural community. Her presence helps ensure that patients who need advanced cardiac care are identified early and not overlooked. Allison brings nearly two decades of experience in an ICU caring for cardiac surgery patients. After 19 years at the bedside caring for some of the most complex heart patients, she became a nurse practitioner to intervene earlier in the care journey and help patients avoid crisis whenever possible. In Blackstone, she not only evaluates new cardiac patients but also works closely with them to navigate barriers such as transportation, access to medications, and balancing heart health with the daily demands of farm life. By bringing specialized cardiac expertise into the family practice setting, Allison is helping close gaps in care and strengthen heart health close to home.



From Left: Autumn Kea, Dr. Dennis Swan, Allison Longest NP, Cynthia Menear, Darlene Richardson

# Strengthening Heart Failure Care

The Advanced Heart Failure Clinic team is deeply grateful for the Foundation's generous and ongoing support. Philanthropy directly strengthened our ability to care for patients with heart failure and expand access across the region.

This partnership has also enabled expansion to Memorial Regional Medical Center, including a two-day-per-week outpatient clinic and inpatient rounding five days a week.

The major success has been the Diuretic Program, now in place for two years, which has treated 280 patients through intravenous (IV) diuretic treatment - often avoiding emergency department visits. Patients receive next day follow-up to ensure stability at home.

Looking ahead, we anticipate continued growth, including recruitment of a second heart failure physician in 2026.

The team shares, "Donor support helps us deliver better care and outcomes every day."



From Left: Shashanna Perry, Regional Practice Manager, Peggy Meek, Clinical Nurse Manager, Andrea Macalma, Lead Heart Failure Nurse

# Improving the Human Condition Through Research

With cardiovascular disease a leading cause of death in the U.S. and heart failure contributing more than a third of these deaths, groundbreaking research to improve patient outcomes and reduce mortality risk is imperative. Bon Secours is committed to this goal by providing several heart failure research trials to our community including the AIM-HIGHer trial, led by Dr. LaVone Smith. This trial explores whether Cardiac Contractility Modulation (CCM) improves health status, functional capacity, and overall mortality for our heart failure with preserved ejection fraction (HFpEF) patients. This work reflects our ongoing commitment to advancing innovative therapies for patients in our community.



LaVone Smith, MD

Research is the cornerstone of advanced heart failure management. Research transforms uncertainty into evidence, and evidence into standards of life-saving care. It refines our therapies and redefines what survival and quality of life truly mean for our sickest patients. The future of advanced heart failure treatment depends on today's commitment to rigorous research and innovation.

— LaVone Smith, MD

# 2025 CLINICAL TRIALS BY THE NUMBERS:

**12** Open Trials  
**1** New Trials Opened  
**2** Compassionate/Emergency Uses\*  
**1205** Patients Total Participating  
**1125** New to Research Patients Enrolled

Your support for cardiovascular research advances life-saving care and discoveries your loved ones can rely on.

\*Use of investigational devices—either planned (compassionate) or urgent (emergency)—when no approved alternatives exist.

# Why I Give

## Jerry's Story—Through the Eyes of Those Who Never Left His Side

Jerry doesn't remember the moment his life was saved. "I was unconscious," he says. "The story really isn't mine."

Instead, it belongs to his wife, Jill, and his son, Gregory—who stood at his bedside, asked the hard questions, and carried the weight of every decision when the prognosis was dire.

From the start, Jerry's condition was critical. A transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) revealed a severe mitral valve infection with rupture, along with infection of a prosthetic aortic valve placed less than a year earlier. His heart was failing, and time was running out.

In a pivotal moment, Dr. Brody Wehman, in close consultation with colleagues, made a life-saving decision to use an Impella device—a small heart pump—deployed in an innovative way to support Jerry's failing heart. The device maintained blood flow, prevented fluid from overwhelming his lungs, and stabilized him long enough for surgery to replace both infected valves.

For Jerry's family, trust became everything.

That trust was built through clear, compassionate communication. "I never felt lost," Gregory shared. "Every doctor and nurse took the time to explain what was happening and what came next. In a moment like that, clarity means everything."

Even with multiple teams involved, care never felt chaotic—only coordinated, calm, and deeply human.

Because at Bon Secours, care extends beyond the patient. It reaches the loved ones standing beside them—the ones holding onto hope.

Jerry is here today because of that care. And just as importantly, his family was cared for, too.

*And that is why stories like his matter.*



Jill and Jerry Mathe

To make a gift in support of patients and families navigating their heart health journey, please visit our website at [givebsmh.org](https://givebsmh.org) or mail gifts to:

**Bon Secours Richmond Health Care Foundation**  
920 Libbie Avenue, Suite 100, Richmond, VA 23226 | 804-287-7700

