

Heart



PennState Health

PENNSYLVANIA HEALTHCARE PROFILES

Helping Anne Help Others

Thanks to Penn State Health's dedicated, compassionate team, Anne Ertel's heart is restored, and her desire to help people is stronger than ever.



ABOVE: Because of Penn State Health Medical Group's attentive care, Anne Ertel's heart has been restored to full service so she can continue to serve others.

“It’s the visit—the hugs and the help I can give,” says Anne Ertel, a social worker and retired physician liaison at Penn State Health, of her service with Meals on Wheels. “The relationships I form are very rewarding. These people are close to my heart.”

That’s why, when Anne began feeling chest discomfort last winter, she initially tried to talk herself out of thinking it could be anything serious. After all, she had promises to keep.

As she considered the possibility that something was wrong, she fortunately had a previously scheduled visit to her long-time primary care provider at Penn State Health Medical Group. She knew his knowledge of her history and the office’s capability would direct her appropriately. At that visit, an EKG showed results that needed attention. She was taken by ambulance to Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center, where a

heart catheterization showed a 95% blockage in one artery—addressed with a stent—and another artery with a 65% blockage that is now being treated with medication.

Within 24 hours, Anne went from chest discomfort to lifesaving attention that ultimately restored her heart for service, both figuratively and literally.

“It was a wonderful experience,” says Anne, acknowledging the odd choice of words to describe a potentially life-threatening scenario. “It’s all due to the staff at Penn State Health—not just their expertise but their compassion.” The prowess of the Penn State Health team has been repeatedly recognized by the American Heart Association for their superior level of heart care provided in every region across central Pennsylvania.

At a time of heightened political sparring and mean-spirited comments bombarding the airwaves, Anne says the medical staff’s kindness, to her and to each other, was especially noticeable.

“The ‘pleases’ and ‘thank-yous’ were flying. It brought tears to my eyes and restored my faith in mankind,” she says. “Everything went like clockwork. Penn State Health is awesome.”

Back at home, Anne began doing virtual exercise classes recommended by her providers and took part in a three-month cardiac rehabilitation program offered by Penn State Health.

“It was wonderful,” she says. “The program is individually tailored with weights, isometrics, and gym equipment. I could go at my own pace, and I felt confident knowing I was being monitored the whole time.”

Heart-to-Heart

These days, Anne is feeling stronger, heartened by the care that enabled her to do what she loves most. She’s walking the dog, paddling her kayak, and, most importantly, serving up a heaping helping of encouragement as she passes meals through her neighbors’ doors.

“I feel so good and so thankful,” she says, advising everyone, especially women, to be in tune with their body’s messages, no matter how subtle. “I had no sweating, no shortness of breath, and no pain down my arm. I just knew I didn’t feel like me.”

Anne says she is especially thankful for the immediate attention she got at Penn State Health Medical Group.

She says it was the start of a Penn State Health journey she didn’t expect, but one that gave her a chance to keep living life on her terms—to get back to doing the things she loves.

500 University Drive | Hershey, PA 17033 | 800-243-1455
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