

Thank you
for giving
from the *heart*

2025 Heart and Vascular Care **Impact Report**

With support from donors and community members, **ECU Health** continues to provide world-class heart and vascular care for patients. From innovative treatments at East Carolina Heart Institute to competitive training for future physicians at **Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University**, eastern North Carolina is a pioneer in the heart and vascular field. The ECU Health Foundation is proud to steward the funding for this critical service in our community. Thank you for being part of this life-changing work.



Celebrating 40 Years of Cardiovascular Care

In September 2025, ECU Health and East Carolina University marked **40 years of cardiovascular care** in eastern North Carolina. The East Carolina Heart Institute (ECHI) has been a cornerstone of heart and vascular care, transforming cardiovascular outcomes across the region by highlighting the importance of education, research, treatment and the prevention of cardiovascular disease.

What started as a comprehensive cardiovascular program at Brody School of Medicine 40 years ago has grown into one of the **nation's premier cardiovascular institutes**, and philanthropy plays a key role in its growth and success.



Thanks to the collaborative approach between the university and the health system, ECHI connects generous supporters to a mission that saves lives every day. Donor support has **fueled innovation, expanded access to advanced technologies** and **strengthened education**, enabling the cardiovascular program to emerge as a national leader and a contemporary university-based model of excellence. Today, ECHI remains a leader in groundbreaking initiatives and innovative treatments and technology. With support from donors and the community, the program will continue to excel and provide world-class heart care close to home.



In 2025, **two new distinguished professorships** were created to support the Brody School of Medicine Department of Cardiovascular Sciences. This brings the number of distinguished professorships held in the department to six. Collectively, these endowments total **\$5.5 million**, the annual proceeds of which not only assist with the retention and recruitment of top faculty but also support programs and advance education and research.



Shining a Spotlight on Aortic Disease

The ECU Health Aortic Program held its second annual Aortic Awareness Day in September, a community-centered event dedicated to education, support and empowerment for individuals affected by aortic disease.

The keynote address was given by John Ritter Foundation CEO and aortic dissection survivor, Meredith Ford O'Neal. The event included a patient panel in which patients who have undergone aortic aneurysm repair and aortic dissection repair shared their personal testimonials and experiences.

Dr. Sam Sears, a professor and psychologist at East Carolina Heart Institute said aortic aneurysms are often undetected and the event was important to bring attention for both community members and the medical community.

This event was **made possible through donor support** of the East Carolina Heart Institute Aortic Program Fund.



Mark Iannettoni, MD, MBA

Chief, ECU Health Heart & Vascular Care
Chair, Department of
Cardiovascular Sciences
Associate Director, Thoracic Surgery
Residency Program

“We are probably one of the best kept secrets in the country as far as cardiovascular care. We’re the only three-star mitral valve program in the state, and we’re one of 20 out of 420 programs.

Without the help of philanthropy, we’d really be just another community program, but it’s allowed us to grow into a contemporary university model that is second to none.”

Heartfelt Gifts. Life-Changing Impact.

Philanthropic support is critical to sustaining and expanding heart and vascular services and programs at ECU Health and Brody School of Medicine. Your generous contributions lead to improvements such as:



ECU Health’s East Carolina Heart Institute has earned **four 3-star ratings**, the highest rating possible, from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons for excellence in adult cardiac surgery. These ratings place ECU Health **among the leading cardiac surgery programs in the U.S. and Canada.**



Critical updates and advancements to equipment and technology were made in 2025, including a new hemodynamic monitoring system for the ECU Health North Hospital Cath Lab, new treatment methods for tricuspid valve regurgitation and new procedures for treating nonvalvular AFib.



The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association has awarded **all nine ECU Health hospitals** with “Get With The Guidelines®” achievement awards, including accreditation for **STEMI, stroke and coronary artery disease programs.**



ecuhealthfoundation.org/heart