

GOOD HEALTH™

A HEALTHCARE JOURNAL FROM SANSUM CLINIC • ISSUE 23 • FALL/WINTER 2019



**VAPING & E-CIGARETTES
TEEN HEALTH**

**PANCREATIC CANCER
SURGERY PROGRAM**

**WOMEN'S HEALTH
INITIATIVE**

**SPOTLIGHT ON
GASTROENTEROLOGY**



Dear Patients,



We live in world in which technologies appear before we really understand their impacts and their effects on us. Social media arrived on the scene before we could understand how it might affect our world. Consumer access to DNA sequencing through mail-in tests has allowed people to know about their genome before we know how to advise them of the significance of the findings.

In this issue, Sansum Clinic pediatrician Dr. Dan Brennan explains about another new “technology” that arrived before it is fully understood — “vaping.” With cigarette smoking on the decline we thought children would be safer, but “vaping” has emerged as a popular and potentially dangerous trend among young people. Dr. Brennan has done his homework and offers everything parents need to know about e-cigarettes in his article *Teenage Vapeland* on page 2.

Even with new technologies in our midst, sometimes, good old-fashioned “doctoring” is what is needed. Dr. Reyna Talanian’s routine morning track workout at San Marcos High School led to a fortuitous encounter with then-junior year student Ben Blankenhorn, who survived sudden cardiac arrest thanks to the CPR that she administered with the help of Ben’s basketball coach, Chucky Roth. Read more about Ben’s message of hope, which begins on page 6.

Often at Sansum we merge old-fashioned doctoring with new technology. Dr. Marjorie Newman was the emcee of *Spring into Good Health* – an educational panel discussion featuring six female physicians talking about new developments in their fields. The event was held at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center and hosted by the Sansum Clinic Women’s Council. The day generated tremendous interest in women’s health services and has led to the establishment of our Women’s Health Initiative, which you can read about on page 13.

Dr. W. Charles Conway MD, FACS, the first fellowship-trained surgical oncologist to join the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center at Sansum Clinic, performed over 20 major pancreatic surgeries last year, earning Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital status as a high-volume hospital for pancreatic surgeries, according to The Leapfrog Group. Read about his patient Peter Moreno’s return to good health on page 10.

A patient recently told me that one of the best kept secrets about Sansum Clinic is the fact that we are a nonprofit organization. We reinvest all earnings back into the organization to continually improve care and expand services for our patients. Generous support from donors enables us to offer services beyond those which insurance reimbursement covers, including procurement of new equipment and technology, recruitment of the best and brightest physicians, as well as free health education classes and free diagnostic services for patients without the means to pay. We are guided by a volunteer Board of Trustees, who are some of our unsung heroes of local healthcare. I would like to thank this distinguished group of professionals (see page 1) who dedicate endless hours to ensuring Sansum Clinic is able to provide the right care, in the right setting, at the right time, and at an affordable cost.

Sansum Clinic has been dedicated to caring for our patients for nearly 100 years, and we thank you for entrusting us with your care.

Sincerely,

Kurt N. Ransohoff, MD, FACP
CEO and Chief Medical Officer

GOOD HEALTH

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Sansum Clinic published
three times a year

ISSUE 23 • FALL/WINTER 2019

Sansum Clinic’s mission is to provide an excellent healthcare experience, recognizing our first priority is the patients we serve.

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GOODHEALTH

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This magazine is not intended to provide medical care. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor. All information in this publication is for educational purposes only.

Teenage Vapeland

What parents need to know about E-Cigarettes

YOUR HOMETOWN DOC – DR. DAN BRENNAN



between 2017 and 2018. The CDC now estimates that 1 in 4 high school students are using or have tried tobacco products.

Recently published data suggests that 4 out of 5 kids who are using tobacco products started with a flavored e-cigarette product, with use starting as young as 12 years of age.

It shouldn't take long to connect the dots here. We have a significant rise in teen/preteen use of tobacco products in just one year and all indicators point to e-cigarettes as the gateway.

What is an e-cigarette?

An e-cigarette is a handheld electronic device that allows a person to inhale aerosolized substances such as nicotine or cannabis in a discreet way.

These devices may be referred to as “e-cigs”, “vapes”, “vape pens”, “juuls”, “suorins”, “dabs”, “e-hookahs” or by other names. Some look like regular cigarettes or cigars, while others may be stealthily designed to look like a pen, USB flash/thumb drive, battery charger or an asthma inhaler.

How does an e-cigarette work?

Most e-cigarettes have a battery, a heating element, a place to insert a cartridge or a reservoir to hold a liquid concentrate. They produce an aerosol or “vape” by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine or cannabis, flavorings and other harmful chemicals that the user inhales into the lungs. Unlike conventional cigarettes, there is not usually an odor or residue. Many of these devices are recharged with a USB charger.

What is in an e-cigarette?

In addition to delivering a high dose of nicotine or cannabis into the lungs, a “vape” will also deliver ultrafine particles (harmful to lungs), diacetyl (a compound linked to serious lung disease), propylene glycol (which can release carcinogenic formaldehyde vapor when heated), heavy metals (nickel, tin and lead) and other known cancer causing chemicals.

“Dabbing”, “juuling” and “vaping”. Have you heard of these? Your teen probably has.

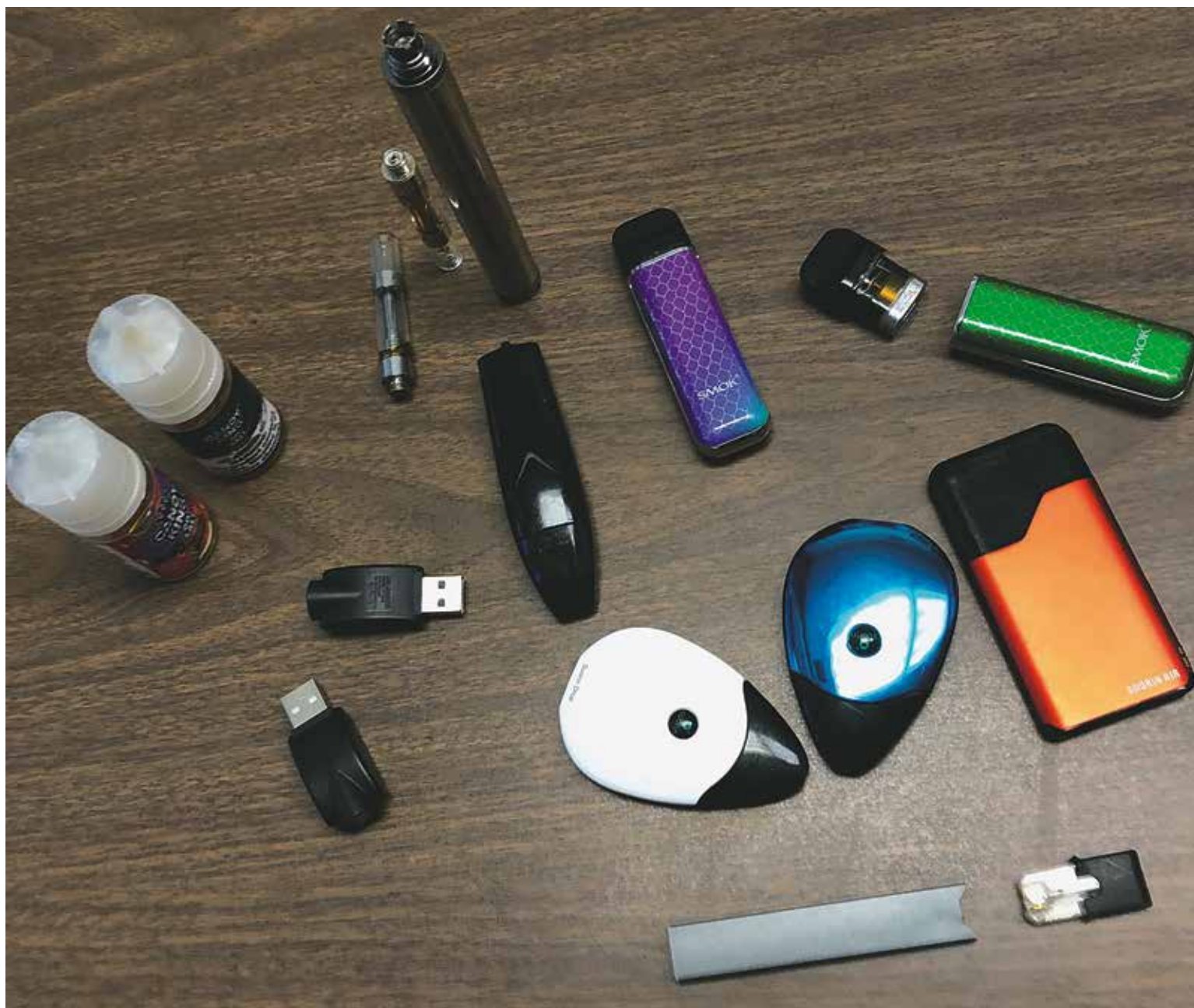
Have you noticed a change in your teen's behavior? How about a sleek looking pen, a gadget that resembles a computer flash drive or a USB charger that doesn't connect to any of your electronic devices? Have you come across a small vial of concentrated liquid or a small plastic cartridge that you don't recognize?

If so, then you may have stumbled upon one the newest and fastest growing teenage trends.

If you are a parent, here is a primer on teenage vaping.

Smoking hot statistics

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), e-cigarette usage increased by 75% among high school students



What are some of the health risks that doctors are concerned about?

In a nutshell, the medical community is very worried about teenage vaping and the potential for nicotine addiction, mood changes, brain rewiring, lung damage, increased risk of cancer and other harmful effects of vaping.

Nicotine is known to be an extremely addictive and toxic substance. This is especially the case with a developing teenage brain. Neuroscience has taught us that a developing teenage brain can sustain long-term changes, including a permanent “rewiring” of brain synapses that can alter attention span, memory function and the ability to learn.

Nicotine will also enhance a teenager’s impulsivity and cause irritability, anxiety, mood swings and learning difficulties.

The current generation of e-cigs can deliver up to 6 times the amount of nicotine as the first generation of e-cigs, making it especially addictive to young teens and adults. This helps us better understand why there has been a 75% increase in e-cigarette use in just the last year.

Throw in an increased risk of cancer to the primary “vaper” (and their second-hand vape buddies) and you start to understand why e-cigs are starting to get the attention of parents, doctors and other health advocates across the country.

Story continues on page 4

Continued from page 3



Flavors hook kids

You may have seen some commercials talking about “flavors hooking kids”. Why are e-cigs flavored and how do they “hook” kids?

E-cig manufacturers cleverly use “flavors” such as cotton candy, fruit, cereal flavors, coffee and chocolate to mask the harsh

taste of tobacco, making it easier for kids to tolerate and enjoy. Surveys have shown that most kids think they are just vaping a flavored-scented water vapor and have no idea that they are actually inhaling a highly concentrated, addictive nicotine product along with other harmful chemicals.

Types of devices

To better understand e-cigs, one must become more familiar with the types of devices currently being used.

Closed systems. With a “closed system” device, the user purchases pods or cartridges (prefilled with nicotine or cannabis) to attach to their e-cig. Of the “closed system” devices, Juul is the most popular. Some consider the Juul to be the “iPhone of e-cigs”. According to one publication, Juul has taken over 70% of e-cig market share and is 16 times more likely to be the e-cigarette of choice for teen users. A Juul device is easy to hide because it looks like a flash drive and can be charged in a USB port. All Juul flavors contain nicotine. One Juul pod can contain the nicotine of 20 cigarettes and can deliver nicotine up to 2.7 times faster than other e-cigarettes.

Open systems. With an “open system” device, the user can refill the device with any “e-liquid” or “e-juice”. As a result, thousands of flavors are available with this type of system. The packaging for “e-juice” is often branded to appeal to kids with fun sounding flavors and it is marketed to appeal to younger kids. These devices can be filled with flavored nicotine, cannabis or other substances. Suorin makes several stealth and very popular open system e-cigarette devices. The Suorin “drop” is the shape of a teardrop and can be carefully hidden in the palm of the hand while one takes a hit, while the Suorin “air” is rectangular-shaped, about the size of a credit card and can slide into a wallet.

(With traditional cigarettes, the harsh taste and side effects of

tobacco might discourage a teen from smoking 20 cigarettes. With flavor added, just imagine just how much nicotine an unsuspecting teen could vape in a short time frame with one of these e-cig nicotine delivery systems.)

What is a Dab?

Dabbing used to be Cam Newton’s signature touchdown celebration. Now “dabbing” is a way for teenagers to get high by vaping an easily concealable, odorless and smokeless cannabis concentrate that is made up of 50% to 80% THC (by comparison, regular marijuana is about 12% THC).

Because dabbing involves a much higher concentration of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol – the psychoactive chemical found in marijuana), its physical and psychologic effects may be more severe. Since a dab vaporizes at a much higher temperature, it can also lead to the individual inhaling dangerous byproducts, including benzene (known to cause leukemia), rust and other toxic metals into their lungs.

Why are teens vaping?

Vaping has become a hot new trend and reasons why teens vape are numerous. Some vape because it is what their friends are doing and they take a hit when it is offered to them. Others own their own personal devices and may even give names to their pens. For some, vaping may offer the thrill of puffing out a big cloud of smoke and others may be truly addicted to nicotine and need professional help to break their addiction.

What can parents look for?

With traditional cigarettes, parents used to be able to smell the scent of tobacco on their teen’s clothes or on their breath. With modern e-cigs, there is no smoke and virtually no smell. So how might a parent know if a son or daughter was vaping?

You might notice a change in your teen’s behavior, including mood swings, irritability, impulsivity and wanting to hang out behind closed doors. (I understand that this also describes many teens who are not vaping.)

You might get a hint of a fruity or unusual smell coming from your teen’s room or you might notice a fancy looking pen, thumb drive, credit card or stylus in their backpack, wallet or on their desk. If a pen has openings on the top and bottom, you might take a closer look.

Listen carefully. If you start hearing your teen or their friends use terms like “vaping”, “juuling”, or “dabbing” then you might want to start engaging in more conversation. If you hear your teen or their friends constantly talking about an individual that you don’t recognize, ask about it and don’t be shocked if you find out that the name actually refers to a vape pen and not an actual person.

Check your credit card for unusual charges. Online purchase of vaping products is widely available and while technically illegal for a teen to purchase, is pretty easy for a savvy teen to figure out. It may be as simple as a click on a website banner that says you are 21. To conceal their purchase, some teens may have their online items shipped to a friend's house instead of their own. You may notice an increase in your teen sipping more liquids or having more frequent nosebleeds. These may be subtle changes, but the propylene glycol found in "e-juice" can lead to dry mouth and brittle nasal passages causing increased thirst and more frequent bloody noses.

For those vaping cannabis, red eyes and the munchies are still a reliable tip-off.

What can a parent do?

From my encounters in the office, vaping is becoming much more common in our community. Many of the patients and parents I talk to have heard about e-cigs, but are unaware of just how common and easy they are to acquire. Most are unaware of the presence of nicotine and just how addictive and dangerous nicotine can be on a developing teenage brain.

My best advice is for parents to educate themselves about e-cigarettes and then talk to their teens. Ask them if they ever see "e-cigs" or "juuls" or "dabs" at school or at a friend's house. Ask them about which of their friends may be vaping. Keep this dialogue running.

Talk to other parents. Some kids vape alone, while others vape in larger social groups. You may find out that some parents are okay with their kids vaping and this might help you decide if you really want your teen to hang out or sleep over at that friend's house.

In my opinion it is okay (and necessary) to take a look every now and then in your teen's backpack, desk drawer, wallet or car glove box. If you see a device that raises a red flag, ask about it. Maybe it's just the latest in computer storage devices or maybe it is an addiction that you can help prevent by acting early.

For teens who are vaping regularly, they may already have a significant addiction to nicotine and you may need to contact their doctor to talk about nicotine addiction.

If you are a parent who vapes, try to keep your devices secure and be sure to let your kids know that their developing brains and lungs are especially vulnerable to permanent damage.

Let's work together to learn more about teen e-cigarette use and nicotine addiction in our community. Since vaping seems to be starting in the middle school years, parent and student education needs to start in the elementary school years. Let's collaborate to take the "high" out of junior high and high school and prevent Santa Barbara from becoming a Teenage Vapeland.

To find out more about vaping and e-cigarettes, I would recommend visiting the California Department of Public Health's website, www.flavorhookkids.org.

Dr. Dan Brennan is a board certified Pediatrician at Sansum Clinic.
(805) 563-6211 or www.sansumclinic.org 🌻

Teenage Vapeland

Q & A

KIDS ALWAYS SAY, "IT'S JUST FLAVORED OIL. THERE'S NO NICOTINE IN IT." IS THERE A WAY THAT KIDS WOULD KNOW IF IT'S NICOTINE, CANNABIS OR JUST FLAVORED OIL? HOW WOULD PARENTS KNOW IF IT'S NICOTINE OR CANNABIS?

This is a common misperception. Most "flavors" DO contain nicotine. If you have access to the "e-juice" container, then it is fairly easy to look up the ingredients online. Certain brands, like Juul, only make cartridges with nicotine. Other brands are known to only contain cannabis. Testing strips are also available to purchase to help determine if there is nicotine or cannabis.

IS THERE A PRODUCT THAT DOESN'T HAVE THAT BIG PUFF OF VAPOR – ANYTHING WITH NO VISIBLE RESIDUE? I HEARD THAT KIDS VAPE IN CLASS AND BLOW THE VAPOR DOWN INTO THEIR SHIRTS AND TEACHERS HAVE NO IDEA.

Unfortunately, e-cigarettes and their vapor can be hard to detect by smell or residue. Some students have been known to vape in class by discreetly exhaling the vapor into/underneath their shirts. Teachers may be unaware that a student is vaping in class. Some schools provide an app, like the "STOPit app", that allows a student to anonymously report someone vaping in class or elsewhere on campus. Once the school receives the anonymous tip, a school administrator is able to search the student and his or her backpack.

WHAT'S THE PRICE RANGE? IF I GIVE MY KID \$40 FOR THE WEEK AND IT IS ALWAYS GONE, COULD VAPING BE A FACTOR?

As the cost of e-cigarettes has decreased in recent years, the popularity of vaping has increased. E-cigarettes cost only a fraction of traditional cigarettes. A 10 ml bottle of "e-juice" can cost as little as \$7 and is the equivalent of paying \$1.40 per pack of cigarettes. This could be as little as 10-20% of the cost of a pack of traditional cigarettes. The online price of a Juul starter pack is under \$40 and this provides a Juul device, charger and multiple pods. One Juul pod costs about \$4 and is the equivalent of 20 cigarettes. 🌻

Fates Align for High School Athlete and Sansum Clinic Doctor

ED BAUM

When Ben Blankenhorn began his day on August 22, 2017 there were no warning signs that a medical emergency was about to happen. It was the second day of his junior year at San Marcos High School and he was doing an early morning workout on campus with his teammates from the school varsity basketball team. Nearby on the same athletic field, Dr. Reyna Talanian, an internist at Sansum Clinic, was training with Santa Barbara Running & Racing. The running group meets Tuesday mornings on the track at San Marcos. Little did these two people know that their lives were about to intersect in a very meaningful way.

“I heard somebody yelling frantically for help: Is there a doctor here?” recalls Dr. Talanian. “I saw the boys from the basketball team standing near a teammate who was lying on the ground. As I ran toward them I presumed that a student athlete had simply overexerted. But as I got closer I saw it was much more dire. His lips were blue. I thought: Oh, this is serious.” As serious as a heart attack. Ben had suffered sudden cardiac arrest.

Ben’s teammates and other bystanders were frightened and concerned but didn’t know what to do. Dr. Talanian examined Ben and could detect no pulse or breathing. She checked for an obstruction of his airway and then immediately began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Coach Chucky Roth who



Reyna Talanian, MD

had been nearby training the San Marcos girls’ water polo team aided the doctor. “A calm came over me and everything just clicked into place,” Dr. Talanian says. “Coach Roth and I worked well together to administer CPR. We quickly locked into a synchronous rhythm of chest compressions and rescue breaths.”

Time is critical in cases of cardiac arrest. Permanent brain damage is likely if blood flow stops for as little as four minutes. CPR keeps blood circulating to carry oxygen to the brain



Ben Blankenhorn, far left, with his family at the Heart Ball

and other organs until the heart can start again and breathing can be restored. The sooner CPR can be started, the better the chances of successful resuscitation. “Less than a minute elapsed between the time Ben lost consciousness and I arrived to help,” Dr. Talanian says. “It was providential the way the circumstances fell into place for me to be there at the right place and time with the appropriate training and knowledge.”

The doctor and coach continued CPR and began to see positive results within about two minutes. “Ben’s lips regained color and he began some sporadic breathing,” Dr. Talanian continues. “He was still unconscious, but the return of color to his lips showed that the CPR was effective. Blood was circulating and it was oxygenated blood.”

A few minutes later emergency medical services from nearby Santa Barbara County Fire Station 13 arrived on the scene in response to a 911 call from one of Ben’s teammates. They implemented a breathing apparatus and a defibrillator. A defibrillator delivers a controlled electric shock through the chest to the heart. The shock can potentially allow a normal rhythm to resume following sudden cardiac arrest. Ben moved his head a little and breathed lightly as the paramedics attended to him, though he remained unconscious. They put him on a stretcher and took him to an ambulance.

“I don’t know why, but I had a strong feeling that nothing bad was going to happen to Ben,” Dr. Talanian recalls. “I just had

a sense that he was going to be OK.” She was right. When Ben regained consciousness, he was in a hospital bed in the intensive care unit at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, where he had been flown by helicopter to receive care from a highly specialized pediatric electrophysiologist. (We have versions of this in Santa Barbara, but not pediatric versions).

“When I awoke at UCLA, my mom and dad were next to me and explained what happened,” Ben says. “But I couldn’t understand much because I wasn’t fully aware for a few days following the incident. It took me almost a week to comprehend what had happened. I don’t have any recollection of the events that day on the track. The last thing I remember was getting to basketball practice. Earlier that morning I felt normal.”

Ben was diagnosed with a concealed accessory pathway in his heart. Normally, sections of the heart are electrically isolated from one another. In the congenital condition, an accessory pathway creates a way for impulses to travel from the atria to the ventricles of the heart. The disorder can lead to periods of rapid heart rate (tachycardia) and in some cases cardiac arrest. Often there are no warning symptoms for this condition.

An internal cardioverter defibrillator was surgically implanted in Ben’s chest to monitor his heart and shock it back into rhythm if needed. Eight weeks later, the device detected and mitigated a second incident, which enabled doctors to better understand Ben’s condition and correct it by cauterizing the extra pathway to eliminate the issue. Out of all the possible outcomes of Ben’s condition, this was a very good one.

Spreading a Message of Hope

Ben fully recovered with no neurological damage and was able to return to school. Two surgical procedures and recovery caused him to miss several weeks of classes. “Going back to school was a very big moment for me,” he says. “I saw how everyone cared about me. Everyone was very intrigued to hear my story. It was great to see a community that cares.”

“It was really impressive the way the faculty and students rallied around Ben,” says Kim Blankenhorn, Ben’s mother. “We met with his teachers on a regular basis. They were very patient with him and allowed him to make up his assignments over a reasonable amount of time. The school counselor and teachers worked with him to help him stay on course.”

Today Ben is more than just a survivor. He is using this experience to help spread an important message. The American Heart Association contacted Ben and asked if he would become a spokesperson for them. “During my emergency and recovery I saw so many people who truly cared and who put in so much effort to take care of me,” Ben says. “That inspired a desire in me to want to give back to the community. Through the American Heart Association I have an opportunity to do my part and show my gratitude.”

Ben’s service with the American Heart Association has included helping with a Valentine’s Day radiothon and visiting local businesses when the AHA provides CPR training for employees.

“One of our goals with the American Heart Association is to get people CPR certified,” Ben explains. “The hope is that when a crisis happens, there is somebody around who knows what to do to save a life, the way Dr. Talanian did for me.”

Ben recently spoke at the AHA Central Coast Heart Ball. An Evening with Heart took place May 4, 2019 at the Stephens Estate in Hope Ranch to raise funds and promote the lifesaving work of the American Heart Association. At the event, Ben shared his story with a large crowd of influential leaders from the corporate, philanthropic and medical communities. “I was glad to have an opportunity at the Heart Ball to share my story and how the incident affected my family and me,” Ben says. “One thing to remember is nobody in my family knew beforehand that this emergency was going to occur. I want to help people be aware that things like this do happen. And it can happen to any one of your loved ones at any moment.”

“CPR training is extremely important,” adds Ben’s father Chip Blankenhorn. “If there hadn’t been someone like Dr. Talanian there who knew what to do, it could have been a very different outcome as far as Ben’s survival and overall cognitive function. It’s a reminder of what wonderful, caring and experienced doctors we have in the healthcare community in Santa Barbara, particularly Sansum. Sansum provides services to our community that we shouldn’t take for granted.”

“I’m glad I was there when Ben needed me,” Dr. Talanian says. “Thinking about what he will achieve in his lifetime gets me excited. He now has a platform and the ability to change other people’s lives by telling his story. I was a piece in that puzzle. I was in the right place at the right time with the right training. Like many people, I sometimes question my purpose in life. Was I destined to be a doctor? This experience answered that. It all led up to Ben surviving. He will go on to do great things.”

Ben now attends University of San Diego where he plans to pursue a major in business. “I want to explore the field,” he says. “I’m a creative person. I see myself perhaps starting my own business someday. I’ve also been learning to play guitar and piano in the year and half since my incident. I love making music and writing songs. I plan to take a guitar or keyboard with me to college.”

Ben’s medical emergency had a big impact on the boys from the varsity basketball team who witnessed the event that morning at the beginning of their season. “What happened to me touched all my teammates deeply,” Ben says. “It changed their views about life, as it has changed mine. A lot of them wrote their college application essays about my incident and how the experience affected them. My teammates who were there that morning are some of my best friends today.”

After Ben’s recovery, doctors cleared him to return to basketball practice and competition. Later that season, the San Marcos varsity team won the CIF Southern Section Basketball Championship for the first time in school history.

Ben’s takeaway from all this is heartfelt gratitude. “Often I think about what happened to me,” he says. “It reminds me how grateful I should be, and that I should appreciate life and live it to the fullest.” 🌻



Community Lecture Series

at Wolf Education & Training Center



Ridley-Tree Cancer Center and Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara host free lectures open to patients and the community to discuss relevant topics in cancer care and cancer prevention.

We are excited to announce our Summer & Fall lectures.

To RSVP, please email events@ridleytreecc.org or call (805) 879-5698. To RSVP for Spanish translation, call (805) 563-5802.

Did you miss a lecture? Don't worry, you can watch it online!

Visit our YouTube channel at youtube.com/cancercentersb to access recordings of our past lectures.

Upcoming Lectures

Summer

Stress and Cancer: Why Stress Reduction Is Essential

Saturday, September 14



When going through a cancer diagnosis and treatment, it's natural to experience a heightened stress response. With greater awareness of the physiology of stress and some simple techniques, stress reduction is just a breath away. Join Cheri Clappett for this enlightening lecture, and learn ways to unravel the harmful effects of stress. Support your body so it can focus on using energy towards healing.

Cheri Clappett, C-IAYT, ERYT-500, is the Founder and Director of the Therapeutic Yoga Training Program. She is a certified yoga therapist with over 25 years of teaching experience and is passionate about bringing the benefits of yoga to those recovering from or living with injury or illness. Cheri has presented Therapeutic Yoga at Beth Israel Medical Center and the Langone Medical Center at NYU. Cheri started the yoga program at the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center in 1999, where she continues to teach weekly classes.

Fall

Genetic Counseling and Hereditary Cancer

Thursday, November 14



This presentation will provide an overview of the genetic counseling process for hereditary cancer. Genetic counseling can help patients and families with a history of cancer better understand and manage the risk of developing cancer through genetic risk assessment and genetic testing.

Topics will include how genetic counselors assess family history for features of hereditary cancer and what information individuals may learn from genetic testing.

Danielle Sharaga is a licensed certified genetic counselor at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center. Danielle has a Master's Degree in Genetic Counseling from the University of Pittsburgh and has been a practicing genetic counselor for 8 years. 🌻



W. Charles Conway II., MD, FACS, Leads Pancreatic Surgery Program at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, Now Designated a High Volume Hospital for Pancreatic Surgeries

W. Charles Conway MD, FACS, is the first fellowship-trained surgical oncologist to join the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center at Sansum Clinic. He performed over 20 pancreatic surgeries last year, earning Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital status as a high volume hospital for pancreatic surgeries, according to The Leapfrog Group.

Due to the complexity of pancreatic surgery, especially the Whipple procedure (pancreaticoduodenectomy), the Leapfrog Group, Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCan) and the American Cancer Society strongly recommend that patients who need pancreatic surgery seek out hospitals and physicians with experience and a recorded “high volume” of at least 15 to 20 pancreatic surgeries a year. According to the American Cancer Association, surgery offers the only realistic chance to treat pancreatic cancer. Data show high-volume surgeons at high-volume hospitals have higher success rates and fewer complications, including lower mortality rates.

The Whipple procedure is the most common operation to remove a cancer in the head of the pancreas. During this operation, the surgeon removes the head of the pancreas, a portion of the bile duct, the duodenum and surrounding lymph nodes.

Pancreatic cancer is sometimes called a “silent” disease because symptoms are rarely noticeable in its early stages, or are vague and can be easy to ignore, including back or stomach pain, bloating, trouble digesting food, unexplained weight loss, and yellowing skin or eyes. PanCan recommends consulting with a physician if you have any of these symptoms.

Dr. Conway completed general surgery training at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI and a surgical oncology fellowship at the John Wayne Cancer Institute in Santa Monica, CA, which included broad surgical oncology training as well as focused study in the treatment of gastroesophageal cancers at the University of Southern California, and liver and pancreas cancers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. From there he accepted a position at Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans, LA where he spent eight years as a high volume pancreas surgeon, and has performed over 300 Whipple procedures including those requiring vascular reconstruction. 🌻

For more on the work of Dr. Conway and the success of the Pancreatic Surgery Program team, see Peter Moreno’s story on page 10.



RIDLEY-TREE CANCER CENTER

PANCREATIC CANCER PROGRAM

“For complex pancreatic cancer surgery, like the Whipple procedure, outcomes are best when performed by an experienced surgical oncologist in a high volume program like we’re able to offer in Santa Barbara.”

— W. CHARLES CONWAY, II, MD, FACS
FELLOWSHIP-TRAINED SURGICAL ONCOLOGIST



Specialized Surgeon Arrives Just in Time for Pancreatic Cancer Patient



Peter Moreno and Dr. W. Charles Conway

Peter Moreno considered himself healthy and active for a 58-year old who traveled the country for his jewelry-sales career. A severe, head-on car accident in the fall of 2017 brought his get-up-and-go routine to a halt. Peter's body ached terribly so hospital physicians ordered scans to view his bones and organs. The imaging cleared him of any serious internal injuries but the tests also shockingly revealed a softball-sized tumor in his pancreas that had grown around the upper intestine. Removing it would be no small feat.

"I was in total denial," Peter recalls. "My head was spinning. Other than the pain from the impact of the car accident, I had no pain. There was no indicator telling me that I had any type of cancer. I kept saying, 'Are you sure you didn't make a mistake?'"

When Peter spoke to Dr. Daniel Greenwald at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, the oncologist confirmed the diagnosis, adding how fortuitous it was that the car accident turned up the cancer.

"Pancreatic cancer often presents very late because we have not yet developed an effective screening test to detect it early and symptoms are often not present until the disease is advanced," Dr. Greenwald explains.

Peter's second stroke of luck was the arrival of Dr. W. Charles Conway, the center's first fellowship-trained surgical oncologist whose specialty is pancreatic cancer. Dr. Conway began work in Santa Barbara just two weeks before Peter's car accident.

The very-specialized procedure Peter required could now be



performed by a high-volume surgeon, increasing his chances for a successful outcome. Receiving care in his hometown was a victory for Peter. “It was surreal,” he describes. “If Dr. Conway had not been there, I would have had to go to Los Angeles or somewhere further for this surgery.” Dr. Conway understood the relief this provided for his patient. “It’s enough to deal with just knowing that you have pancreatic cancer, but then to have to drive two hours to have surgery away from family and friends, that really adds to the stress of the situation,” he confirms.

After Dr. Conway successfully removed the pancreatic tumor, Peter’s medical team began multi-disciplinary discussions to determine the best treatment options. Drs. Conway and Greenwald also shared Peter’s pathology reports with their colleagues around the country to gather more feedback. And then, the physicians received an opportunity for one more unique opinion on the case.

“We actually happened to have a visiting professor shortly after Mr. Moreno’s surgery. And the visiting professor was a pancreas surgeon in Scotland, very well-known,” notes Dr. Conway. Professor James O. Garden from the University of Edinburgh presented a lecture as part of Sansum Clinic’s Visiting Professor of Surgery Education Program and met with Peter’s team to discuss whether chemotherapy was the most medically-sound option. “He agreed 100% with the approach, the therapy and was quite impressed with what’s available in Santa Barbara compared to the major academic center that he’s been teaching at for decades,” says Dr. Greenwald.

While his doctors guided his treatment, Peter slowly adjusted to a new pace of life. Recovery meant finding the best way to ease tightness in his mid-section and gingerly twist his torso out of bed each morning. He determined not to let his physical condition rob him of his sunny attitude. “Right after surgery, it was like my mantra began. ‘I’m getting better every day,’” he affirms.

When chemotherapy sapped his energy, Peter experimented with the roster of wellness classes offered at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, from meditation to yoga to stress management. “Interacting with other people really was part of the healing process,” divulges Peter. “I could feel it helping me.”

The biggest change occurred when Peter attended a music relaxation class with Music Therapist Saiping Lin, MS, MT-BC. Being surrounded by wonderful tones as his body healed struck a deep chord in him. Peter formed a special bond with Saiping as he tried out each of the classes offered by the Elly Nadel Music Therapy Program, including Drumming Together and Singing



Peter Moreno with Music Therapist Saiping Lin

Class. He practiced the breathing tips she recommended to relax his muscles and the more he participated, the more his confidence and memory improved. Music therapy can not only help patients reduce negative side effects or help them to express emotions, it also improves their quality of life, according to Saiping.

During 2018, Peter visited the Cancer Center almost daily for medical appointments, chemotherapy and wellness classes. The warm embrace of the staff and volunteers lifted him emotionally. “Sometimes just to see them smile would make me smile again, even though I was not feeling that great,” he comments. “Everybody has just been so nice and so supportive.”

When Peter met with Dr. Greenwald a few months after his last chemotherapy session and learned he appeared to be cancer-free, “absolute elation” washed over him. He knew his doctors felt the same. “It’s not just a job. You can tell they are there because they care. They truly care about us,” he affirms.

Peter is now a regular fixture at the Cancer Center, reaping the benefits of the wellness programs and bringing other patients into the fold. He’s grateful to his doctors for giving him a new lease on life. “It’s been amazing to me how everything has fallen into place,” he shares. “I am progressing, always moving forward, thanks to everyone’s help. 🌻

The Elly Nadel Music Therapy Program is generously underwritten by Julie Nadel.

Spring into Good Health



Julie Nadel, center in pink scarf, with Dr. Marjorie Newman, second from right, and the panel of six female doctors, addressed below in the order in which they appear here

“We’ve come a long way baby,” announced Sansum Clinic **Medical Director Dr. Marjorie Newman** as she opened the *Spring into Good Health* event hosted by the Women’s Council of Sansum Clinic. Dr. Newman praised the organization’s achievement in increasing the percentage of female physicians from 20% in 2000 to 42% currently and noted that the push into specialties traditionally dominated by male providers deserved special attention. “I am thrilled,” she expressed. “I do a lot of the recruiting and I have seen the trajectory. More women are going to medical school and they are finding mentors in fields not typically in the purview of female physicians.” Dr. Newman moderated a panel of six female doctors who discussed the latest advancements in their fields. Afterwards, they took questions from the audience.

Urologist Dr. Alexandra Rogers, the only female fellowship-trained urologist in the Santa Barbara area, relayed how many of her female patients with overactive bladders cannot find a truly effective remedy. For this reason, she’s enrolled 26 patients in a clinical trial for the eCoin device which combats unpleasant symptoms by stimulating the tibial nerve in the lower leg. **Breast Surgeon Dr. Rosa Choi, MD, FACS** clarified how women not designated as “high risk” should begin mammography screening annually at age 40, aligning with recommendations from the American Society of Breast Surgeons. **Ophthalmologist Dr. Toni Meyers** described the micro-invasive glaucoma surgery she performs and how it offers relief for her patients troubled by increasing eye pressure. **Obstetrician and Gynecologist Dr. Heather Terbell** stressed

the importance of HPV vaccinations to help protect against types of the virus that lead to cervical cancer. **Urologist Infectious Disease expert Dr. Mary-Louise Scully**, who also runs the Travel & Tropical Medicine Center, highlighted the rise of “superbugs” or multi-drug resistant bacteria (MDR). These bugs are a global challenge plaguing humans and animals, making physicians rethink how they prescribe antibiotics, according to Dr. Scully. **Oculoplastic Surgeon Dr. Mica Bergman** outlined the kinds of procedures she performs for eyelid drooping and how her fast-growing specialty is improving patients’ vision and appearance.

Before the panel discussion at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, guests enjoyed refreshments and a performance by **Music Therapist Saiping Lin, MS, MT-BC**. Following the physician discussion, afternoon tea was served in the Healing Garden where attendees could converse with the doctors and meet local medical professionals.

Representatives from many Sansum Clinic and Ridley-Tree Cancer Center departments and programs of special interest to women, including the Doctors’ Weight Management Program, Cardiology, Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Genetic Counseling, Health Education and Nutrition, Mindful Eating and Prescription Navigation, gathered on the patio to explain their services and specialties. “I love that women are taking charge of their health,” commented Donna Gill, Manager of Doctors’ Weight Management Program. “This does feel less clinical and more like a conversation.” Many participants appreciated that the female-focused dialogue was on target with subjects they wanted to know about. “This was outstanding in every way,” mentioned Maryan Schall, Sansum Clinic Honorary Trustee. “It was beautifully prepared and we all came away enriched.” Other women liked the chance to visit with the physicians and have their concerns heard in a more casual setting. “This was nice to interact one-on-one,” said guest Charlene Daly. “Women are the caretakers of our society and to come together is empowering,” added Dr. Terbell. “I hope we addressed things that might be uncomfortable for people to ask.”

The Spring into Good Health event was organized by Julie Nadel and Bobbie Rosenblatt of the Women’s Council, who frequently donate their time to help educate the community about timely health issues. The program was generously underwritten by title sponsor Southern California Reproductive Center and supporting sponsors Montecito Bank & Trust, Waiakea Hawaiian Volcanic Water and Rincon Events. 🌸

How You Can Help



Dear Patients,

"We need women who are so strong they can be gentle, so educated they can be humble, so fierce they can be compassionate, and so passionate they can be rational," states Kavita Ramdas, former CEO of the Global Fund for Women. The female physicians at Sansum Clinic and the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center embody all these characteristics.

In the last two decades Sansum Clinic has come a long way in its support of women's healthcare. In 2000 only 20% of our physicians were female and now, nearly 20 years later, approximately 42% of our physicians are women, specializing in fields that have historically been dominated by male physicians – like urology and other surgical specialties.

Sansum Clinic currently provides medical care to 128,964 patients (816,415 visits) and **56 percent of those patients are female.**

Our Women's Council recently hosted an event for women by women, featuring six of our female physicians talking about the latest advancements in their medical specialties. The event was extremely well received and the response from our guests was an enthusiastic request to provide additional support for the special healthcare needs of women.

In our effort to bring greater focus to women's health, Sansum Clinic is launching a **Women's Health Initiative**, dedicated to supporting educational forums for women, as well as purchasing state-of-the-art medical equipment and providing unique services directed specifically at enhancing women's health.

The purchase of an additional 3-D Mammogram Machine to supplement the two 3-D machines currently in operation at Sansum Clinic is at the top of the list of priorities for the Women's Health Initiative. Always in high demand, these machines provide greater accuracy, earlier detection, decreased recall rates and improved patient experiences when compared to earlier mammography equipment.

Your gift to our new Women's Health Initiative will support the launch of a fund dedicated to the health of women today and tomorrow and will help us with the purchase of a third 3-D Mammogram Machine.

Many people don't realize that as a nonprofit organization, Sansum Clinic reinvests earnings back into the community by continually improving care, equipment and services for our patients. In an era of diminishing insurance reimbursements, the Clinic's commitment to providing high quality care relies increasingly on the generosity of our donors.

You are an important partner in our current and future success. Thank you for the confidence you have placed in Sansum Clinic for your healthcare. We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our request for support, and we are truly grateful for every gift we receive, large or small.

Best wishes to you and your family for continued good health throughout the year. 🌻

Sincerely,

Janet A. Garufis
Chair, Board of Trustees

Vicki Hazard
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

Julie Nadel
Co-Chair, Women's Council

Bobbie Rosenblatt
Co-Chair, Women's Council

The Sansum Clinic Gastroenterology Team:

ED BAUM



Disorders such as narrowing of the esophagus (a condition known as a Schatzki ring that can cause intermittent difficulty swallowing) and many other GI problems can be treated quickly and easily as an outpatient procedure to bring immediate and life-changing relief. Other procedures are preventative. Crucial among those are colonoscopies and upper endoscopies.

“Everyone over the age of 50 should get a colonoscopy,” Ms. Verdugo urges. “It can save your life. Some ethnic groups and people in certain situations such as those who have a family history of cancer in the GI tract may have an increased risk of developing colon cancer at a younger age and need to get a colonoscopy earlier in life. The best time to come in for your first colonoscopy is something a primary care physician or gastroenterology physician can help you determine.”

The preventative and diagnostic work performed by the Gastroenterology team has a significant positive impact on community health. Colorectal cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer death among men and women in the United States. The good news is it is preventable. “We find that 20 to 30 percent of people who come in for a screening colonoscopy have a colon polyp,” Ms. Verdugo says. “A polyp is a group of cells that form on the lining of the colon, which can develop into colon cancer. By removing small polyps we can significantly reduce the probability of cancer forming. The goal is to catch pre-cancerous and cancerous lesions early when they are curable.”

When the doctors at Sansum Gastroenterology discover a polyp in the colon during a colonoscopy, they remove it during the same visit, as long as it is safe for the patient. Then a sample is sent to the pathology lab where it is given a closer look under a microscope to determine if it is normal tissue or if it has the characteristics of something that could potentially develop into a cancerous growth. After the doctors review the pathology results, a letter is sent to the patient. In many cases the letter informs the patient that it was normal tissue and they should return for their next screening in ten years. If the results suggest the presence of precancerous cells or adenomas, patients are placed in a higher risk category. High-risk patients usually need to return in three to five years for a follow-up procedure.

Patients also visit the center for upper GI tract surveillance via an upper endoscopy. “There is a marked increase in adenocarcinoma of the esophagus in recent years,” Ms. Verdugo explains. “Because of the uptick in incidence of esophageal cancer, there is increased attention paid to acid reflux and the damage it may cause.”

There is a classification of patients that includes males between the ages of 45 and 65 who have a long-standing history of reflux.

Imagine you're in a restaurant having a nice meal with friends. Suddenly you realize your last bite of food is stuck in your esophagus and you are having difficulty swallowing saliva. You make apologetic signs to your fellow diners and rush to the restroom to induce vomiting and alleviate the obstruction.

It's unpleasant to picture yourself in such a situation. However, many people suffer with conditions such as a narrowing of the esophagus and other gastroenterological problems that can severely impact their quality of life or threaten their health. Thankfully, the team at the Sansum Clinic Gastroenterology Department is on the job providing exceptional patient care across a wide range of curative and preventative gastrointestinal (GI) health issues.

The team includes four board-certified gastroenterologists and a dedicated support staff between the Ambulatory Surgery Center and the Gastroenterology Department at the Pueblo branch. (See sidebar.) This group of professionals sees nearly 300 patients each week and provides more than 8,000 procedures each year. They do both consultative and procedural medicine in the office.

“Patients are referred to our department for a variety of gastrointestinal issues,” explains Glenna Verdugo, RN manager of the Gastroenterology Department. “Often times, patients present for a routine colorectal cancer screening procedure. Other patients may have an ailment or a symptom and have been referred by their primary care physician to our gastroenterology physicians to help identify the source of their gastrointestinal problem.”

Dedicated to Improving Community Health

In such cases, gastric acid may erode the esophagus and cause cellular changes over time that can lead to cancer. “Just because you have heartburn or reflux doesn’t mean you have esophageal cancer,” Ms. Verdugo assures. “However because of the increased risk of esophageal cancer with chronic acid reflux symptoms, we want to survey these patients and possibly suggest protective strategies such as Prilosec or other proton pump inhibitors that decrease the amount of acid produced in the stomach. The important point to stress here is to not ignore symptoms.”

The team often works in collaboration with other healthcare providers including the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center. For example, in cases of cancer of the head and neck or patients who have difficulty swallowing because they have sustained a stroke or other neurologic diseases, patients may need to have a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) feeding tube put in place to enable them to receive calories and hydration during chemotherapy or other treatments. A doctor at the Gastroenterology Department can place the PEG tube as an outpatient procedure. The doctor can remove the tube after the patient completes his or her treatments and once their swallowing function has returned.

World-Class Patient Care

Procedures done at Sansum can be performed within a couple hours or less including check-in, prep, procedure, recovery and discharge. Ms. Verdugo and her team stay current with the industry’s best practices and protocols to ensure each patient’s visit is comfortable, efficient and as safe as possible.

“We get our guidelines from professional organizations including The Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates as well as the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy,” Ms. Verdugo says. “That guidance helps us with everything from the type of anesthesia we use to infection control protocols for reprocessing our scopes. We take those processes very seriously and we continually stay up on industry standards to provide the best patient outcomes.”

Dr. Vincent DeRosa, chair of the Gastroenterology Department, says the staff spends a significant amount of time reviewing patient satisfaction surveys, which are extremely helpful for improving the care they deliver. “Our center is patient focused and we strive to provide the best care,” he says. “We constantly reassess workflow staffing and ensure we purchase the most up-to-date and state-of-the-art equipment. We’ve recently revamped our procedure schedule to improve the workflow of our nurses and providers so we can make sure patient procedures are on time and efficient.”



Sansum Clinic Gastroenterology Department Staff

- Dr. William Hahn – 42 years of MD experience
- Dr. James Egan – 30 years of MD experience
- Dr. Vincent DeRosa – 15 years of MD experience
- Dr. Thomas Caves – 15 years of MD experience

- 18 Registered Nurse Specialists
- 7 Medical Services Coordinators
- 7 Endoscopy Technicians
- 3 Medical Assistants
- 1 Surgery Scheduler

The Sansum Gastroenterology team collaborates with Cottage Hospital and other organizations to provide education and outreach to the community. During colon cancer awareness month each March the team displays educational material in the clinic lobby to deliver information and increase awareness. The department also participates in philanthropic programs including offering as many as 40 free colonoscopies per year through the Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics to uninsured patients who show signs of being at high risk for colon cancer.

Ms. Verdugo is proud of the quality of work her team performs for the thousands of patients they treat each year. “Patients tell us the care they receive here is some of the best in the country,” she says. “These patients are often nervous when they come in. However, the overwhelming majority tell us their worries were eased by how professional, comforting and reassuring our staff was with them during their visit.” 🌻

Weight Loss

Enables an Active Retirement

Relationships with family and friends improve as a result of significant weight loss

ANDREA HOWLAND

Rather than slowing down in retirement, Mike M. now enjoys physically active travel with his wife and playing with his grandkids — traveling and playing in ways he couldn't do before losing — and keeping off — more than 100 pounds with the Sansum Clinic Doctors' Weight Management Program. The ability to engage actively with family and friends has enhanced his relationships in life-changing ways.

On a recent visit with his grandchildren, Mike was playing on the floor with the kids, ages 5, 3, and 10 months. Mike's son came in and with surprise asked his father if everything was alright. Before losing weight on the Doctors' Weight Management Program, and subsequent knee surgery, Mike wouldn't sit on the floor because it was so difficult and painful to get up without assistance. Now, not only does he have fun on his grandkids' level, but he even goes up the ladder and down the slide at the playground with them!

Having suffered from chronic pain in his right knee after a high school football injury four decades prior, Mike underwent total knee replacement in December 2014. His new knee "felt great for a while," said Mike, but before long the tibial component started loosening partly due to the pressure of his nearly 400-pound body.

Reducing BMI required for orthopedic procedure

With the orthopedic device failing to support Mike's weight, he consulted with Sansum Clinic orthopedist Dr. James Zmolek regarding potential surgery. "A Body Mass Index (BMI) of greater than 40 is associated with a 10-fold increased risk of surgical complication including blood clot, problems with wound healing, infection, and pneumonia," Dr. Zmolek explained. With Mike's BMI well over 40, both his primary care physician Dr. Bryce Holderness and Dr. Zmolek had encouraged him to lose weight. Given the risks, lifestyle alteration and weight loss were mandatory before addressing the joint pain through surgical intervention.



BEFORE



AFTER

Mike with his daughter, Lauren, at her 2017 graduation from the University of Portland, and Mike today

Mike had struggled with weight his whole life. "There isn't a diet I haven't tried," says Mike. "I decided that rather than focus on what I couldn't do, I would focus on what I could do, which led me to get back on a bike." In addition to the challenge of exercising regularly, he took on the work of dieting. He was able to shed the first 30 pounds through efforts on his own. He knew from past dieting experience however, that he needed structure and support with his diet in order to continue to lose weight and keep it off. He considered bariatric surgery which he feared might only result in temporary weight loss without long-term weight management. Then he found the Sansum Clinic Doctors' Weight Management Program, which he discovered would help him continue his weight reduction but also achieve a long-term healthier lifestyle by teaching him weight maintenance behaviors.

In May 2018, with the goal of reducing his BMI to below 40 in order to undergo total knee replacement revision, Mike started Phase One of the Doctors' Weight Management Program. He chose the HMR Healthy Solutions® meal plan. "Healthy Solutions is a moderate diet that incorporates lots of fruits and vegetables in addition to HMR meal replacements," explains Donna Gill, manager of the Doctors' Weight Management Program.

The Doctors' Weight Management Program team cheers him on

Mike spends about two hours per week at Sansum Clinic's Hitchcock branch where the Doctors' Weight Management Program is located, weighing in, reporting his weekly intake, meeting with his coach, picking up his HMR meals, and attending his health class. From the people who greet you when you walk in, to the staff and classmates, Mike says, "It feels like a whole team is pulling for you."

"I couldn't do it alone," says Mike, who credits all of the components of the Doctors' Weight Management Program as being crucial to his success. About the group experience in weekly health class Mike adds, "It really is fun to come to class and share. Initially I didn't want to spend time in health class; that's not how I had envisioned my retirement! But health educator Alysha Izoco makes every class exciting, informative and useful. People sharing their lives, successes and challenges builds incredible community, so you're surrounded by people rooting for you. Alysha is able to help us recognize our challenges and guide us to solutions. There's no better way for me to spend my time."

Weight loss brings about additional health improvements

By November 2018, Mike achieved his BMI goal and had the total knee replacement revision surgery performed by Dr. Zmolek. He says it was "the 8th major surgery I've had on my right leg since breaking my femur twice in high school. This is the first time in my adult life that I function with minimal pain." Additionally, Mike's weight loss eliminated severe discomfort in his left knee, thus allowing him to defer another total knee replacement surgery. Significant weight loss may assist in avoiding surgical intervention according to Sansum Clinic's orthopedics team. Mike's weight loss contributed to other health benefits including ablation treatment to negate atrial fibrillation and the need for associated medication. In addition, Mike's sleep apnea symptoms have significantly improved.

Mike incorporated exercise into his life as part of his new healthy lifestyle. When starting the Doctor's Weight Management Program, he rode an electric bicycle. After losing 130 pounds, he bought himself a new bike without electric pedal assistance. Now he is self-powered and cycles more than 100 miles each week. Cycling has become a favorite activity around town and when he travels with his wife.



Mike's life changed drastically for the better in the span of just one year. This past spring, the weight loss allowed him and his wife to travel throughout Asia where they biked, snorkeled, and walked a total of 150 miles, including climbing the many stairs of the temples at Angkor Wat in Cambodia. It was the first time during his adult life that he fit comfortably in a coach seat on an airplane and did not feel the embarrassment of having to ask for a seat belt extender.

Upon returning from his trip, Mike started Phase Two of the Doctor's Weight Management Program. During this phase, patients may continue to lose weight or opt to maintain the weight they've lost in Phase One. Mike is committed to losing 40 additional pounds, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the weight loss is permanent. Regular visits with the Doctors' Weight Management Program staff and health class participation continue during this phase. "Phase Two of the program gives people the tools and support they need to take weight loss beyond a short-term achievement and make it a sustainable lifestyle, providing practical strategies about how to make the right choices to maintain the success they achieve in Phase One," says Donna Gill.

When talking about the program and his experience, Mike says, "The story isn't about me; it's about what Sansum Clinic has made possible with the Doctors' Weight Management Program for anyone who wants to change their life. It's simple – not easy – but simple and effective. It's a great program and a great team!"

Mike retired in January 2018. He has lived in Santa Barbara since 2014. He enjoys active travel, bicycling, and playing with his grandchildren.

To learn more about the Doctors' Weight Management Program, please call 805-563-6190 or sign up to attend an informational orientation session, offered twice weekly at 51 Hitchcock Way, Santa Barbara, California. 🌻

Fall Nine-Week Boot Camp

Lose Weight Before The Holiday Season Begins Simple & Gimmick-Free For Real Results

The **Doctor's Weight Management Program** combines a structured diet and physical activity with the help of behavioral coaches so you can lose weight while learning the skills you need to keep it off long-term.

You CAN blend healthy eating with a busy life. Boot Camp members follow a low-calorie meal plan full of fruits and vegetables along with HMR® meal replacements, a research-based program ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as the #1 diet for fast weight loss in the 2019 *Best Diets* ratings.

Patient Julie McGovern shed 20 pounds during a ten-week Boot Camp. She credits her health coaches for encouraging her.

"They are with you every step of the way."

Space is limited!

Sign up to attend an information session by

September 16

Reserve your spot in the Boot Camp which begins

September 25

Attend nine Wednesday evening sessions

September 25 – November 20



Before



After

Doctors' Weight Management Program

51 Hitchcock Way, 2nd Floor

Santa Barbara, CA 93105

(805) 563-6190

hmrprogram@sansumclinic.org

To sign up, find us at:

www.sansumclinic.org/doctors-weight-management-program/about-program 🌻



Camp Wheez is a day camp for children in grades 1 through 6 with asthma. They enjoy a camp experience designed for their special needs and learn about their asthma while participating in games & recreation, arts &

crafts, and old-fashioned camp fun! Founded by Myron Liebhaber, MD in 1978 in partnership with the American Lung Association, Camp Wheez is held every summer, free of charge and open to the community.

This summer Camp Wheez kids experienced a dinosaur world. They made dinosaur eggs for snack, dinosaur silhouette artwork and did dinosaur drumming. A highlight was a visit from Grayson Kent, Paleontologist, who shared dinosaur and reptile fossils as well as his collection of living reptiles. How many kids does it take to hold up a giant living cobra? Eight kids at Camp Wheez!

At Camp Wheez the children also learn about their asthma. They inflate real pig lungs to better understand the respiratory system and play Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune and spelling bee – all with an asthma theme. The children have an opportunity to be part of a research study to better understand the impact of asthma education on airway inflammation. As part of the study, campers did a non-invasive pulmonary function test called FeNO on day 1 (baseline) and day 5 (end of Camp). The test involves blowing into a device that measures Exhaled Nitric Oxide, a marker of airway inflammation. At Camp Wheez in 2018 children with a low or intermediate FeNO, indicating low or intermediate inflammation, remained approximately the same over the week. Children with a high baseline, indicating high inflammation and high risk of asthma exacerbation, showed a 10% improvement by the end of camp. This significant improvement demonstrates the effectiveness of the 5-day program of hands on learning about asthma

management. Dr. Liebhaber remarked “that this allowed us to directly confirm that the Camp Wheez experience has a direct effect on asthma control.” This study was published and repeated at Camp Wheez in 2019. Once again, the results look promising!

The fun, learning and science of Camp Wheez are made possible by the generous support of many community members and organizations including:

- Julia Chang, RN
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Clark
- Jim and Peggie Cox
- Victoria Eng, MD
- Robert Fry, MD
- Gail M. Grant
- Karen Johnson, MD
- Ernest Kolendrianos, MD
- Myron Liebhaber, MD
- John Motola, PT
- Geary and Tina Olivera
- Deborah L. Reber
- Casey Rives, MD
- Michael and Rania Shenoda
- Swanton Foundation
- Boys & Girls Club of Santa Barbara
- CenCal Health
- Cottage Health Respiratory Therapy Department
- Easy Lift
- Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics
- Veronica Springs Church
- And many, many community volunteers ☀️

Bobbie Rosenblatt Welcomes George

Bobbie Rosenblatt, Chair of the Art Committee for Sansum Clinic and the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center, welcomes George "GOTCHA!" to the Healing Garden. This statue was created by world-renowned sculptor Seward Johnson. We are honored to have received this outstanding gift from the Roberta and Stan Fishman Collection. George serves as an ambassador welcoming patients, their families and staff to our very special outdoor space. 🌻



Farmers Market Live Cooking Demonstration

Take a stroll at Farmers Market to get inspired by the season's bounty. Visit the live cooking demonstration by our nutrition experts Sarah Washburn, MS, RDN, CSO and Rebecca Colvin, MPH, RDN, CSO. Learn about food choices for optimal health and discover new techniques for preparing seasonal offerings.

Saturday, November 9, at 10:00 am
 Downtown Farmer's Market,
 near the Cota Street entrance
 Sponsored by Sansum Clinic and
 Ridley-Tree Cancer Center. 🌻

What is Advance Care Planning? Is it for me?

You may be healthy now, but what if you become very sick or injured in the future and important decisions have to be made – decisions that would affect you? Who would you want to speak for you? How would doctors, nurses, and your loved ones know what kind of healthcare you would like to receive, unless you'd made those decisions in advance? It is never too early to have meaningful conversations regarding the healthcare choices you would make if you could not speak for yourself in a health crisis.

Advance care planning is:

- Making decisions now about the types of healthcare you would and would not want to receive if you become very sick or injured and couldn't speak for yourself in the future.
- Choosing a person you want to speak for you if you're unable to do so for yourself.
- Talking with your doctors and loved ones about the types of healthcare you want to receive so they'll respect and honor your values and healthcare goals.
- Writing down your healthcare goals in MyCare, an advance directive.

Advance care planning is a helpful way for people of all ages to prepare for the future.

At Sansum Clinic we have many tools, free of charge, to help you complete your Advance Directive. We offer:

- **Information and forms** you need in our Health Resource Center and online at ACP.SansumClinic.org
- **Advance Directive Workshops**, open to the community, to help you learn more and to answer your questions.
- **Individual appointments**, available to Sansum Clinic patients, with staff trained to help you complete your form.
- **NEW!** We now offer the service of a **Notary Public** to patients of Sansum Clinic who have completed their Advance Directive and need to have it notarized or witnessed.
- **Assistance filing your completed form** with Sansum Clinic and Cottage Hospital

Please contact our Health Resource Center for further assistance or to make an appointment for any of these services.

Sansum Clinic Health Resource Center
 215 Pesetas Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93110
 Located near the mountainside entrance
 Phone: 805-681-7672 🌻

Sansum Honored for Medical Excellence



Members of the Sansum Clinic Quality Management Team (L to R): Dr. Kurt N. Ransohoff, Dr. Marjorie Newman, Barbara Conviser, Jennifer McGahey, Meredith Payne and Sean Johnson

Sansum Clinic is being recognized for providing high-quality care to **Medicare Advantage** patients by the Integrated Healthcare Association (IHA), a statewide nonprofit organization. The group is committed to high-value, integrated care that improves quality and affordability for patients across California and the nation.

Each year, IHA recognizes physician organizations that achieve a 4.5- or 5-star rating. **Sansum Clinic attained a 4.5 star rating out of a possible 5 stars for 2017-18** and was the only medical group in Santa Barbara to earn 4.5 stars. “This achievement indicates a high level of commitment to our patients,” said Marjorie Newman, MD, Sansum Clinic Medical Director. “We are dedicated to providing them with excellent medical care, performance measurement and continual improvement.”

Other medical groups that scored high in California include Sutter Medical Foundation, UC Davis Medical Group and UCLA Medical Group. 🌟

Sansum Achieves ‘Elite Status’ from America’s Physician Groups



Members of the Sansum Clinic Executive Team (L to R): Matthew Kunkel, Chad Hine, Dan Weigel, Dr. Marjorie Newman, Dr. Kurt N. Ransohoff, Tom Colbert, Alex Bauer and Sean Johnson

Sansum Clinic achieved ‘Elite status’ from America’s Physician Groups (APG), the organization’s highest ranking, as part of its Standards of Excellence™ Survey 2019. America’s Physician Groups (APG) is the leading association in the country representing over 300 medical groups, independent practice associations, and integrated healthcare systems across the nation. To receive Elite status, a physician group must receive five-star ratings defined by rigorous, peer-defined benchmarks in six areas: care management practices, information technology, accountability and transparency, patient-centered care, group support of advanced primary care, and administrative and financial capability. “We are proud to be recognized for strong performance in these key components of healthcare delivery,” said Kurt N. Ransohoff, MD, CEO and Chief Medical Officer and former chair of the APG Board of Directors. “We have worked hard to put initiatives in place that improve the health of our populations and enhance the patient experience, while maintaining a focus on efficiency.” 🌟



Community Gout Presentation

Sansum Clinic rheumatologist Dr. Stuart Segal will present a free community lecture on living with gout and arthritis, including diagnosis, management and treatment options. The talk is hosted by the Arthritis Foundation.

Thursday, September 26, 5:30-7:30 pm
 University Club, 1332 Santa Barbara Street in Santa Barbara
 Space is limited. Please RSVP to Juli Askew at (805)563-4685 or jaskew@arthritis.org. 🌟

Awards & Recognition

SANSUM CLINIC SURGEONS HONORED AT GENERAL SURGERY RESIDENCY PROGRAM GRADUATION



Colon and rectal surgeon Dr. Greg Greaney was recognized for his 30 years of service to the community at the graduation ceremony for the residents of the General Surgery Residency Program at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.



Dr. Ben Howard, general surgeon, was recognized for being selected by the graduates as “2018 Teacher of the Year”.

MCNAMARA FUND FOR PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT AND EDUCATION & NURSING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2019

Sansum Clinic knows the value of investing in employee education and development. Through the generous support of donors, the McNamara Fund for Professional Enrichment and Education, and the Nursing Scholarship Program help to support both clinical and non-clinical employees with educational endeavors enabling them to reach their career goals.

Eleven recipients were awarded with grants and scholarships toward development in their respective fields and careers. These programs continue to make a direct impact on our community, offering the assistance deserving staff needs in order to afford higher education, and in developing our next generation of leaders.



Chris McNamara and Dr. Jim McNamara

MCNAMARA FUND FOR PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT AND EDUCATION RECIPIENTS

Octavio Avila, Center Support Technician, Foothill ASC (joined Sansum Clinic in 2007)

“Now, fresh off my 12th year at Sansum Clinic, I find myself at a crossroads. I’m eager to further my education and a grant from the McNamara Fund will allow me to attend the nursing program at Santa Barbara City College. I hope to be a greater asset and more valuable member of our team.”

Stefanie Christopher, Nuclear Medicine Technologist, Nuclear Medicine (joined Sansum Clinic in 2017)

“Every year the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging hosts an annual meeting that takes place over a four-day period and provides professionals in the field of nuclear medicine an in-depth view of the latest developments in the field. The McNamara grant will allow me to attend the meeting and acquire new techniques and learn new protocols to improve image quality on scans we currently perform on a daily basis. It will also enable me to learn about our new and upcoming diagnostic imaging and therapeutic agents, and view technologically advanced instrumentation emerging in today’s market.”

Kelsey Halterman, MSC Supervisor, Patient Access (joined Sansum Clinic in 2014)

“When I started at Sansum Clinic I had no experience in healthcare or an office setting. Through an excellent training program and a lot of help along the way I was able to start helping patients schedule appointments and connect with their providers. In order to expand my knowledge I am interested in pursuing a BS in Health Administration.”

Maricela Hurtado Salinas, Clinical Resource RN, Specialist, Pesetas Urgent Care (joined Sansum Clinic in 2016)

“The emergency nurse certification will enable me to study illnesses seen at urgent care and learn how to quickly manage them within my scope of practice. Medicine is constantly changing and staying current is something I strive to do.”

Amanda McFee, Registered Nurse Specialist, Foothill-ASC (joined Sansum Clinic in 2017)

“I am now an experienced OR nurse who wants to expand my knowledge base. The CNOR is the only credentialing program for perioperative nurses and serves to strengthen and validate their highly specific skills. The grant from McNamara Fund will allow me prepare to become certified as a CNOR. This would enhance my confidence and augment my ability to serve as a resource to my team members. Most importantly, obtaining my CNOR would further refine my ability to provide excellent patient care.”

Awards & Recognition



Front row: Chris McNamara and Dr. Jim McNamara.
Back row from Left to Right: Michelle Viale, Maricela Hurtado Salinas, Amanda McFee, Stefanie Christopher, Kelsey Halterman, Octavio Avila, Rebecca Ogletree, Kristin DeHahn, and Jasmine Pizano.

Kimberly Santos, Registered Nurse Specialist, Charge, (joined Sansum Clinic in 2012)

“The ER conference and CEN certification are valuable educational opportunities that will allow me to enhance my knowledge and performance as a registered nurse and expand my critical thinking skills. I will be able to confidently provide care that is evidence based best practice.”

Michelle Viale, Medical Coder, Certified, Corporate (joined Sansum Clinic in 2016)

“I have been in the medical coding department since November 2016. In January of 2017, I started online courses with Santa Barbara City College for an AS degree in Health Information Technology. I would like to pursue additional certification from the American Academy of Professional Coders to broaden my horizons in preparation for the exam and certification.”

WOMEN’S EDUCATION & BREAST HEALTH FUND RECIPIENT

Christina Jaramillo Rodriguez, Registered Nurse Specialist, Oncology Infusion Center (joined Sansum Clinic in 2016);

“This fund will allow me to take the Breast Cancer Bundle course available through the Oncology Nursing Society. The course covers prevention, breast cancer, treatments and symptom management, as well as survivorship of breast cancer. By taking this course, I will be able to provide my patients with up-to-date information regarding breast health.”

SANSUM CLINIC NURSING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Kristin DeHahn, Registered Nurse Specialist, Oncology Infusion Center (joined Sansum Clinic in 2015)

“My goal is to become a Family Nurse Practitioner practicing in my local community of Santa Barbara. The financial assistance will help allow me to focus on my academic success during school and will reduce my student loan debt when I begin working as an advanced practice provider.”

Rebecca Ogletree, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Pesetas Urgent Care (joined Sansum Clinic in 2015)

“I have had the privilege of working at Sansum Clinic in Urgent Care for almost 4 years as an LVN. I have been given so many opportunities to grow, refine clinical skills, and also gain new ones. I realize how much more I could do if I were a registered nurse. I have one semester left until I graduate in December and am able to take my RN licensing exam. This scholarship will allow me to finish strong and continue my story.”

Jasmine Pizano, Registered Nurse, Country Clinic Family Practice (joined Sansum Clinic in 2016)

“Throughout my employment with Sansum Clinic I’ve learned communication and body language is key in providing excellent patient care. Transitioning from a medical services coordinator to a registered nurse has given me phenomenal skills that have helped me address a broad range of patient concerns. This scholarship will allow me to further my education and pursue my baccalaureate degree in nursing.” 🌟

Dr. David Carlson Back in the Classroom

Nuclear Medicine Physician David Carlson, MD spent a week at UCSF this summer teaching radiology students how to interpret digital PET/CT imaging.

The lessons are part of his annual commitment to give back to the academic institution where he completed a three-year nuclear medicine residency, a year of diagnostic CT training, and a fellowship in CT.

His teaching and service earned him the 2018 UCSF Department of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging's Outstanding Clinical Faculty Awards. 🌟

David Carlson, MD, with family at UCSF



Back Issues & Archive

For previous issues of GOODHEALTH magazine, or our 2018 Annual Report, please visit www.sansumclinic.org.



Welcome New Providers

ALLISON AKERS, DO

Sansum Country Clinic
2027 Village Lane, Suite 102, Solvang

Dr. Allison Akers joined Sansum Country Clinic's Family Medicine Department in Solvang in July. Dr. Akers earned a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from Midwestern University, Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine and then went on to complete a family medicine residency program at Dignity Health, Marian Regional Medical Center.

ERIC BANK, MD

Ridley-Tree Cancer Center (Solvang) & Specialty Care
2040 Viborg Road #140, Solvang

Dr. Eric Bank, medical oncologist, joined the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center Solvang location in mid-July. Dr. Bank earned his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City and then went to the University of California, Los Angeles where he completed his internal medicine internship and residency. Dr. Bank then went on to complete his hematology and oncology fellowship at UCLA Olive View/Cedars Sinai, in Los Angeles. Dr. Bank is also a native of Santa Barbara and is glad to return to his home town to practice.

AEGEAN H. CHAN, MD

Dermatology
215 Pesetas Lane, Santa Barbara

Dr. Aegean H. Chan joined the Dermatology Department at Pesetas Multi-Specialty Clinic in early February. Dr. Chan received her medical degree from Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She went on to complete her internship at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City and completed her residency and fellowship at Montefiore Medical Center. Dr. Chan is board-certified in Dermatology and Dermatopathology.

MIRIAM A. COMMISSO, LMFT

Psychiatry
3916 State Street, Santa Barbara

Miriam A. Commisso, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, joined the Sansum Clinic Psychiatry Department on State Street last March. She earned her degree from Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara and completed an internship at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.

CRISTINA HARNSBERGER, MD

Colorectal Surgery
317 W. Pueblo Street, Santa Barbara

Dr. Christina Harnsberger, board certified general and colorectal surgeon, joined the General Surgery Department in early July. Dr. Harnsberger earned her medical degree from the University of California, Irvine and then went on to complete her surgery internship and residency at University of California, San Diego, as well as a research fellowship in minimally invasive surgery. Later, she completed a second fellowship in colon and rectal surgery at the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Harnsberger was raised in Santa Barbara.

ALEX LEASURE, MD

Urgent Care
215 Pesetas Lane, Santa Barbara

Dr. Alex Leasure joined the Pesetas Urgent Care at the end of July as a full time physician. Dr. Leasure earned his medical degree from the University of Queensland – Ochsner Clinical School in Brisbane, Australia where he completed his medical science work and then completed his clinical rotations at the Ochsner



ALLISON AKERS, DO



ERIC BANK, MD



AEGEAN CHAN, MD



MIRIAM A. COMISSO, LMAFT



CRISTINA HARNSEBERGER, MD



ALEX LEASURE, MD



DAVID LERNER, DO



GRAHAM N. REIMER, MD



CYRUS SIRCAR, DPM



CATHY STRAITS, MD



SARAH SWANSON, MD

School of Medicine in New Orleans, Louisiana. Dr. Leasure then went on to complete his family practice residency at the University of Florida and is relocating to Santa Barbara with his wife, Dr. Marie Claire Lamb, who is a Santa Barbara native and will be joining the Clinic in October as an internist.

DAVID LERNER, DO

Cardiology Department

317 W. Pueblo Street, Santa Barbara

Dr. David Lerner, board certified internist and non-invasive cardiologist, joined the Cardiology Department in mid- July. He earned a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine and then completed his internal medicine internship and residency at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. After completing his residency, Dr. Lerner went on to complete a cardiology fellowship at Northside Hospital and Heart Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida, followed by a second fellowship in advanced cardiac imaging at Scripps Clinic in La Jolla, California.

GRAHAM N. REIMER, MD

Pain Management

3916 State Street, Santa Barbara

Dr. Graham N. Reimer joined the Pain Management Department in April. He earned his medical degree from University of California, Davis and completed both his internship and residency at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center specializing in Anesthesia and Pain.

CYRUS SIRCAR, DPM

Podiatry

4151 Foothill Road, Building A, Santa Barbara

Dr. Cyrus W. Sircar joined the Podiatry Department at the Foothill Medical & Surgical Center on Foothill Road in April. He earned his Doctor of Podiatry from Western University of Health Sciences, Pomona and completed his residency at Central Alabama Veteran's Health Care System with a specialization in Podiatry.

CATHY STRAITS, MD

Goleta Family Practice

122 S. Patterson Avenue, Santa Barbara

Dr. Cathy Straits, board certified internist, returns to Sansum Clinic from the Lompoc Valley Medical Center primary care practice to join the Goleta Family Practice.

SARAH SWANSON, MD

Internal Medicine

215 Pesetas Lane, Santa Barbara

Dr. Sarah Swanson, a board certified internist, earned her medical degree from the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University in Rhode Island and completed her internal medicine residency at University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Swanson has been working as a clinical instructor and hospitalist at UCLA for the past year where she has served as a primary care provider and coordinator of care for a panel of patients in both inpatient and outpatient settings. 🌻

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