

GOODHEALTH™

A HEALTHCARE JOURNAL FROM SANSUM CLINIC • ISSUE 28 • FALL 2021



**OB/GYN CARE
DURING COVID-19**

**PANDEMIC EFFECT ON
MENTAL HEALTH**

**COMPREHENSIVE
TREATMENT
FOR CANCER**

**ENT PATIENTS
BREATHE EASIER**

SANSUM CLINIC



YEARS OF
MEDICAL EXCELLENCE





Dear Patients,

One of the wonderful benefits of receiving healthcare in Santa Barbara is that despite the small size of our town, patients can access the highest levels of quality, similar to what's offered in big cities and large academic centers. This has been true of Sansum Clinic since our beginnings over 100 years ago, and is true today. One perfect example of this is Ridley-Tree Cancer Center at Sansum Clinic, which recently celebrated its 4th anniversary. That facility was purposely planned and constructed to support an evidence-based, multidisciplinary model of cancer care, where our team of specialists, from oncologists, radiation

oncologists, surgeons, therapists and nurses, to researchers, patient navigators, social workers, and genetic counselors, collaborate to create personalized treatment plans for patients.

At our Cancer Center, we make the time to get patients in, to discuss their care to relieve anxiety about their diagnosis, so treatment can begin quickly, if that is needed. Patients only need to visit one building to receive services from any of these experts, and our highly-trained physicians can easily coordinate with members of a patient's medical team, from Ridley-Tree and from Sansum Clinic. This talented group is motivated to stay-up-to date on the latest therapies and research in order to give every person that comes through our doors the best chance for a successful outcome. This model of care is the passion of our newest oncologist/hematologist, Maíra Campos, MD, who joins Ridley-Tree with a special interest in breast cancer research. You can read more about Dr. Campos on page 10.

Our partnership with the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara means we are continually able to acquire the best technology for Ridley-Tree, offer wellness and support programs that otherwise wouldn't be possible, and ensure high-quality cancer care for everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. As CEO and a physician, I hope our patients understand that now more than ever, where they choose to receive their care can impact their ability to beat an illness or disease, as well as manage well the emotional and physical toll they and their loved ones may experience. The medical team that treated pancreatic cancer patient Michael Miller included physicians and staff from both Ridley-Tree and Sansum Clinic. I hope when you read Michael's story on page 6, it will give you confidence that we can care for you at every step, stage and age.

We are more than a year and a half into caring for patients during a pandemic, and it is incredibly gratifying to see our staff and physicians continue to rise to the occasion amidst the challenges. Back in March of 2020, we were not yet thinking about how to simultaneously offer flu shots with COVID-19 shots in the same outdoor tent, how to vaccinate young children on a weekend in a parking lot, or how to safely deliver babies amidst a fast-moving virus. OB/GYN physicians David Raphael, MD and Heather Terbell, MD survived an interesting 18 months, and you can learn more about how their department transitioned to care for women during COVID-19 on page 18. Those are just the tip of the operations iceberg that the pandemic has affected on a glacial scale. Beyond COVID-19's toll on physical health, the effects on our collective mental health have yet to be completely revealed. Sansum Clinic Psychiatrist Dr. Scott Dewhirst addresses this subject on page 2.

I take great pride in knowing we have been compassionately caring for the people around us, our families, friends, neighbors and coworkers, for a century. Part of our longevity is due to our generous community, and the many grateful patients who have supported Sansum Clinic, like our newest Legacy Society member Marilyn Gilbert, who we are pleased to feature on page 12.

As always, *thank you* for choosing Sansum Clinic for your care. Please know, we are here for you, and we are still smiling under our masks.

Sincerely,

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

GOOD HEALTH

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Sansum Clinic published
three times a year

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

Sansum Clinic is accredited by the
Institute for Medical Quality

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COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS at Sansum Clinic

(From the start of the pandemic in March 2020 to Oct. 20, 2021)

43,393

Number of COVID-19 tests administered

15,005

Number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered

170,825

Number of telehealth appointments



New MyChart Features

You can now use MyChart to conveniently log into MyChart to schedule certain types of medical care, when and from where you choose, using your computer or mobile phone.

The newest features include:

- **Primary Care Direct Scheduling.** Patients who have seen their Sansum Clinic primary care provider in the past 18 months can use MyChart to schedule their next non-urgent visit, up to 7 months out.
- **COVID-19 Vaccination Scheduling.** Adult patients can now directly schedule an appointment for their COVID-19 vaccine in MyChart.
- **Flu Shot Scheduling.** Adult patients can now directly schedule an appointment for their annual flu shot in MyChart.
- **Screening Mammogram Scheduling.** Patients age 40-80

who have seen their primary care provider in the recent past can schedule a mammogram appointment using MyChart.

- **Patient Self Sign-In.** Patients with MyChart can let Clinic staff know they are “present” for an appointment in the MyChart app or on the MyChart website on their smart phone.
- **Office Visit Estimates.** Patients can now generate estimates for common office visits in MyChart.
- **Financial Assistance Requests.** Patients can now use MyChart to submit an application and the required financial information in order to apply for financial assistance.



If you are a Sansum Clinic patient and would like to learn more about the benefits of MyChart, visit www.sansumclinic.org. To sign up for MyChart, visit mychart.sansumclinic.org/signup or call the MyChart help desk at (805) 898-3333 Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm or mention MyChart during your next visit with us. 🌟

GOODHEALTH

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On the cover:

From left to right, Dr. David Raphael with baby Jonah, and Rebecca and Justin Foley.



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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.

Q&A with Psychiatrist Dr. Scott Dewhirst

COVID-19 & Mental Health

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT COVID-19'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH?

The pandemic has had a huge impact on mental health. People who had no prior mental health history have been affected by COVID-19. For people with pre-existing mental health conditions, the pandemic exacerbated their underlying vulnerabilities as it relates to mental health.

The latest research released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last summer, a cross-sectional survey, showed about 40% of U.S. adults were struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues. About 30% of U.S. adults suffered anxiety disorders, double from the prior year's totals. 26% were experiencing trauma or stress-related symptoms. 11% of U.S. adults had considered suicide. All that was substantially higher than what was predicted, and what was shown a year prior in 2019.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS OR SYMPTOMS LINKED TO MENTAL HEALTH FROM THE PANDEMIC?

It's anxiety and depression for sure. These conditions are already quite common, roughly 20% of the population has an anxiety or depression disorder. We entered into this pandemic with a population of people already worried about the state of affairs in the country. You throw in COVID-19 and anxiety has increased substantially. People were afraid to leave their homes, had fears about the virus, fears over social interactions, fears about the vaccines, and so on.

IF OUR MENTAL HEALTH WAS STRESSED DURING THIS PANDEMIC, WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH? ARE THEY LINKED?

We know there is a correlation between how you feel physically and how you feel mentally. Many people lost their outlets during the pandemic. Their gym closed, physical activity with others fell by the wayside and people became more sedentary. We are seeing the ramifications of people bored at home, eating more and not exercising. We know that exercise has an important role to play in terms of addressing anxiety and depression.

ARE THERE CERTAIN GROUPS WHO HAVE BEEN IMPACTED DISPROPORTIONATELY BY COVID-19?

Absolutely. The data supports this. We know that minorities were hit harder in terms of the impact. African-Americans

and Hispanics had much higher rates of mental health issues. These populations already had less access to mental health resources, leaving them more vulnerable at the start of the pandemic. Data from the CDC shows that the 18 to 29 year-old group was the age demographic hit the worst in terms of an increased percentage of mental health concerns and suicides. The reasons behind that are not entirely clear. One theory is that this group may have less support, could be more prone to isolation, or could have less-developed coping skills.

In terms of gender, women were more greatly impacted than men, suggesting that women were tasked with managing households, online school for their children, while also managing their own careers.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH MENTAL HEALTH AS WE TRANSITION FROM EMERGENCY MODE TO GOING BACK TO NORMAL?

For some people, the pandemic was a trauma event, losing loved ones or perhaps becoming ill from COVID-19, and we don't quite know what that will unveil down the road. For other folks, the reintegration is part of the challenge; re-entering with your normal connections, your community, your job, and your school in a safe way.

HOW CAN WE KNOW IF OUR INCREASED STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IS TEMPORARY DUE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES, OR IF THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE SHOULD BE PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO?

For some people, changes in mental health are very situational, with external factors like social isolation, loss of a job, financial insecurity and housing insecurity. Childcare and work have been very big issues. Mothers in particular have had a tough time navigating the responsibilities of their jobs, home, and kids learning remotely. For some, when these issues were partially or fully resolved, their mental health improved, but we also know there is a percentage of the population vulnerable to depression and anxiety, no matter what the circumstances. These are incredibly common conditions and those people are still recovering, still dealing with the ramifications of a worsening of their condition.

Getting an expert opinion or evaluation from a professional to determine what is going on is always a good idea, whether that is a doctor or a therapist. I always ask, if we remove the stressor, are you better? If you remove the stress, the person should rebound. Was it just a stressful job or were you



Scott Dewhirst, MD

IS THERE A WAY TO PROTECT OUR MENTAL HEALTH AS WE ALL RIDE THIS OUT?

Routine certainly helps. Those with structure tend to do better. I advise my patients to focus on their own individual lives and factors they have control over. Where do you have room to manage your life? How do you start and end your day? That might involve reaching out to other people, helping someone, or checking on your neighbor. What helps the hopelessness or burnout is doing things that bring meaning and purpose to your life, having a connection to something. We just have to search for it.

ARE THERE SILVER LININGS FROM COVID-19 AND THE PANDEMIC FROM A MENTAL HEALTH STANDPOINT?

One real saving grace for psychiatric care and mental health care has been telemedicine. A physical exam is not always needed to be able to provide adequate mental health care to patients, and the data supports that we can do this well over video. It has increased accessibility for many, and it may even be more comfortable for some people. Many new virtual, online therapy service organizations were created during the pandemic, bringing services to areas with few mental health providers.

In addition, Congress passed a number of bills with funding for mental health programs and services to address what's occurred during the pandemic. Nationally and globally, mental health disparities and challenges have been brought to light. There is still a stigma around mental health, but we are talking about it more. We need a continued reminder that mental health is important. 🌻

truly biologically depressed? For those who have a biologic vulnerability to depression and you bring in a major stressor like the pandemic, it can create a host of problems.

Mental Health Resources

CalHope

FREE counseling services available in person or via Zoom. To connect with CalHOPE by chat or phone, go to calhopeconnect.org and start chatting now. Or call (833) 317-4673 (HOPE). Wherever you are, whenever you need to talk with someone, CalHOPE is available offering safe, secure, and culturally sensitive emotional support for all Californians who may need support relating to COVID-19.

Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness

Contact ACCESS Line at (888) 868-1649 or walk into the clinic.
315 Camino Del Remedio, Suite B, Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Other Resources

- Cottage Hospital Emergency Room, 24-hour emergency line: (805) 569-7210
- Cottage Emergency Psychiatric Services, 24-hour emergency line managed by a registered nurse: (805) 569-8339
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline, 24-hour crisis line: (800) 273-8255
- Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center, 24-hour response line: (805) 564-3696
- Domestic Violence Solutions, 24-hour crisis line: (805) 964-5245 🌻



The Determination to Make a Difference

Disaster Relief Deployments Take Nurse Michael Piela Far Beyond the Clinic

ED BAUM

Code 3. Emergency sirens scream and lights flash on the deputy sheriff's patrol car. Sansum Clinic RN Specialist and EMT Michael Piela is accompanying the officer on a high-speed drive to quickly bring aid to an elderly man who accidentally shot himself with a rifle. The situation arose while Piela's emergency medical volunteer team was being escorted to a nearby city to offer disaster relief. Intense situations like this are a way of life for Piela. "There is no greater cause than saving a life, or significantly improving someone's health status," he shares.



Michael at an early morning American Red Cross Disaster Services deployment briefing

Piela's routine work is at Sansum Clinic's Ambulatory Surgery Center in Santa Barbara, where he and a dedicated staff provide care for a high volume of patients in a fast-paced environment, which significantly ramped up during the pandemic. "We work long shifts taking care of our patients with a wide variety of health conditions and needs," he reports.

Along with his clinic duties, Piela participates in emergency and disaster medical service efforts through Disaster Healthcare Volunteers of California (DHV), the American

Red Cross, and the Medical Reserve Corps. Piela spent 96 days on COVID-19 deployment during 2020 alone, volunteering more than 1,200 hours in leadership and clinical roles for California task forces. In March of 2020, he spearheaded a medical team for the United States Navy Hospital Ship Mercy (T-AH-19), which was moored in the Los Angeles harbor. The focus of the USNS Mercy was to provide medical and surgical assistance for overwhelmed local hospitals. "At times, we had to provide treatment and care of COVID-19 patients around the clock for days until other medical resources became available," Michael explains.

In April of 2020, he signed up for 12-hour shifts in 100-degree heat, in full PPE to support a large, drive-through COVID-19 testing operation at a federal medical site in Riverside County. Immediately after this challenging assignment, he and other volunteers headed to a rehabilitation and nursing center that was overwhelmed by cases of the virus. This was a high-risk assignment, before vaccines were on the horizon. "There were lives at stake, patients needed care, and we were the only medical resources available," Piela describes. "There is no question that we would do it all over again without hesitation. We volunteered to make a difference, do our part in this pandemic, and hopefully save lives."

A veteran of the United States Coast Guard, Piela has successfully completed more than 20 training courses at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) at Fort McClellan in Alabama, the country's most prestigious all-hazard training center, as well as courses from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). When he accepts a deployment with the DHV or other organizations, Piela takes unpaid time off from Sansum Clinic.

He describes a deployment in October and November 2018, when he volunteered with the American Red Cross in rural Georgia and Florida after tornadoes, hurricanes and floods caused widespread destruction and cut off small communities from civilization. "I will never forget the smiles, tears of joy and relief, and the gratitude from the victims and local volunteers as they recognized that help had arrived," he recalls. "It is amazing how powerful a calm and friendly



March 2020, Michael leads medical teams from the United States Navy Hospital Ship Mercy in Los Angeles County



Michael working as a volunteer member of the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department's COVID-19 Response Crew

voice, a smile or holding a person's hand can be, in addition to providing emergency medical aid and patient care." This attitude, alongside all of Piela's experiences and unique education, are woven into his role treating patients at Sansum Clinic's Ambulatory Surgery Center.

Closer to home, Piela volunteers for the Santa Barbara County Medical Reserve Corps. He has vaccinated thousands of community members against influenza and now COVID-19. He provides emergency medical care and first aid during local disasters, large local community gatherings, events and festivals, and distributes N95 masks when wildfires impact our air quality.

On his rare days off, Piela enjoys escaping into the Santa Barbara back country on long hikes with close friends, enjoying nature and searching for quiet and peace. He is humble about his dedication to improving the lives of others. He shrugs off the title of "hero" commonly given to healthcare workers and emergency medical personnel. "In my opinion, none of us chose to be heroes," he says. "We just do what we do best—take care of our patients with full commitment, empathy and passion for our work." 🌻

For the full story on Michael Piela, visit www.sansumclinic.org/michael-piela.



Michael on disaster medical deployment at the Creek Fire, Sierra National Forest in Northern California

On the Road to Wellness

NOVEMBER IS PANCREATIC CANCER AWARENESS MONTH



Rhodes-Fleming Path, Carpinteria Bluffs, a gift from artist Arturo Tello, that inspired Michael's road to wellness

Patient Michael Miller had no idea his life would be changed by pancreatic cancer until a case of jaundice revealed a tumor was constricting his bile duct. He required a physician team to relieve his symptoms and investigate the cancer. Gastroenterologist Vincent DeRosa, MD performed a stent procedure to release the bile and allow it to pass out of the liver properly. Fellowship-trained surgical oncologist William Charles Conway II, MD, FACS began to examine Michael's pancreatic tumor. When pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) set in, Dr. Conway carefully monitored the 69 year-old's medical condition and worked to determine the way forward. Michael's pancreatitis was virulent, painful and had affected his ability to absorb nutrients. Dr. Conway believed Michael needed surgery as soon as he could gain some weight. A Whipple procedure is an extremely complex operation. Outcomes are best with a surgeon who performs many of these procedures, like Dr. Conway. "I felt

very lucky to have this option available in a smaller community like ours," admits Michael. "Traveling would not have been easy at the time."

Michael's surgery by Dr. Conway was deemed a success, however he would still require chemotherapy and radiation therapy to protect against any lingering cancerous cells. Dr. Conway joined forces with Ridley-Tree Cancer Center medical oncologist and hematologist Mukul Gupta, MD to manage his care alongside a team of specialists who would discuss his case — a process common for a multidisciplinary cancer center like Ridley-Tree.

Slightly more common in men than in women, pancreatic cancer has the highest mortality rate of all major cancers, and is currently the third leading cause of cancer-related death in the U.S. after lung and colon cancer. A former Raytheon electronic warfare systems engineer familiar with project management,



"I did not have to struggle to find the best people. They were all right here." — patient Michael Miller

Michael knew he'd need the unique perspective of each person on his medical team to fight this serious diagnosis. "I had an opportunity to ask questions and learn more, and get another expert's opinion," he explains about their collaborative process. When weekly infusion chemotherapy began, so did the tricky job of maintaining his nutritional status with a compromised pancreas. Michael consulted with oncology nutritionist Sarah Washburn, MS, RDN, CSO on which medications might impact his nutrition, and how to use food to minimize side effects from treatment. He also underwent genetic testing to find out if a genetic mutation could have caused his cancer. About ten percent of the estimated 57,000 adult cases of pancreatic cancer diagnosed in the U.S. each year are thought to be hereditary. Danielle Sharaga, MS, LCGC, a genetic counselor at Ridley-Tree, reviewed the results which exposed one gene mutation found in a small percentage of familial pancreatic cancer cases. This gene mutation also confers a

moderately increased risk for breast cancer (24-48% lifetime risk) in women, something Michael was able to share with his two daughters. Leading Michael's course of radiation therapy, Radiation Oncologist George Cheng, MD, PhD patiently answered his queries about the methodology, and didn't mind debating the finer points of electromagnetics as they related to his care. With COVID-19 in full swing and visitor restrictions in place due to infection control, the entire radiation therapy team stood in for Michael's wife, Bekki, across 28 visits, "a remarkable group to me, always positive," he recalls.

Michael describes his cancer experience like a fast-moving train, each stop arriving quickly without time to review the itinerary. A painting by local artist Arturo Tello of a railroad track with a road alongside it sparked a pondering of his own road to wellness. "I thought, "That's where we're headed. There may be rough spots, but that's where we're going." The phrase "on the road to wellness" stuck and he made it his regular salutation shared with his medical team members who became like family. "Everybody is expecting you to recover. You can feel it. I did not have to struggle to find the best people. They were all right here." 🌻

RISKS

The cause of the majority of pancreatic cancer cases is unknown. There is evidence the following may increase your risk of pancreatic cancer.



AGE



OBESITY



PANCREATITIS



SMOKING



DIABETES



FAMILY HISTORY

If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms or think you are at an increased risk for pancreatic cancer, speak to your healthcare provider today.

State-of-the-Art Treatment for Prostate Cancer



(Left to right) Medical Dosimetrist Timothy Johnson, Registered Nurse Susanne Roberts, Radiation Oncologist Dr. Justin Voog, Medical Physicist Meg Barker, Director of Radiation Oncology Clarence Thompson

Radiation Oncologist Justin Voog, MD, PhD and Ridley-Tree Cancer Center's highly-trained radiation oncology team offer an advanced treatment for prostate cancer called stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT.) This innovative technique uses Ridley-Tree's state-of-the-art linear accelerators to safely and precisely deliver curative doses of radiation to the tumor target, while minimizing impact on surrounding tissues. The 20-minute procedure requires five sessions instead of eight weeks of conventional radiation therapy, resulting in faster recovery times. The team incorporates a CT/MRI fusion simulation scan and real-time image-guided radiotherapy, to achieve a high level of precision throughout a patient's treatment course. All SBRT patients receive Space OAR injectable hydrogel prior to treatment to potentially limit side effects that can result from the radiation. 🌻

To learn more about SBRT and all of the advanced radiation oncology treatment options at Ridley-Tree, visit our website at radiationoncology.ridleytreecc.org.

SBRT may not be covered by all health insurance plans. Patients should check with their health insurance provider to determine coverage.



Elekta Versa HD Linear Accelerator



“When I learned more about this new treatment and its potential for fewer side effects, I made a decision to proceed. After SBRT, my test results were beyond my expectations, my prognosis looks excellent and I am very pleased with my treatment choice.”

— SBRT Patient Gary Coates



Cold Cap Program at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center



The Cold Cap Program at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center is sponsored by Athena Cosmetics in partnership with the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara. The Cancer Foundation received a two-year \$100,000 grant to provide Paxman scalp-cooling caps for local cancer patients receiving chemotherapy treatment who are identified as eligible for the protocol. The Paxman system is designed to be utilized during a patient’s chemotherapy treatment and helps prevent the loss of hair on the head by protecting the hair follicle. Ridley-Tree staff are trained to assist patients with putting on the cap and activating the cooling system.

Athena Cosmetics’ founders Dr. Michael Brinkenhoff and his wife, Gayle, began developing life-changing products to help women feel more confident and beautiful after Gayle faced a breast cancer diagnosis in 2006. Since then, it has been the company’s mission to make an impact on the lives of cancer patients. In addition to supporting The Cold Cap Program, Athena also created Revitalash, a lash conditioning serum designed to fortify and restore health to lashes. Like the Cancer Foundation of Santa Barbara, Athena Cosmetics is committed to supporting breast cancer research, education and programs. Currently, The Cold Cap Program at Ridley-Tree Cancer Center can only accommodate a limited number of patients, with hopes to expand the program as funding allows. If you are a patient and are interested in learning more about the program, please speak with your medical oncologist. 🌻

Ridley-Tree staff members assist patients with putting on the cap and activating the cooling system



REVITALASH[®]
COSMETICS



CANCER
FOUNDATION
OF SANTA BARBARA

Bringing Hope to Cancer Patients

Maíra Campos, MD, MPH

ED BAUM



Oncologists are physicians who specialize in diagnosing and treating cancer. These specialists stay up to date about new research and findings so they can help people navigate treatment options, showing compassion and care to their patients and patients' families. Ridley-Tree Cancer Center's Maíra Campos, MD, MPH treats patients with all types of cancer, with a special interest in breast, ovarian and endometrial cancers.

Before completing her fellowship in hematology/oncology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Dr. Campos completed medical school in Brazil, where she was born and raised. "I was the first person from my family to have access to that kind of education," she says. "I am grateful to have been given opportunities, including to engage in clinical trials during my second year of medical school. We were running our own clinical trials under the mentorship of Dr. Auro del Giglio and his team. The results of our trials were published in international journals while we were still medical students. That helped us see that we can have an impact in the world with the resources that we are given."

In her fourth year of medical school, Campos was invited to present one of her papers at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting in Chicago. ASCO is

a professional organization representing physicians of all oncology subspecialties who care for people with cancer. Her experience presenting at ASCO motivated her to uproot from her native homeland. At age 24, she sold her car and moved to the United States to complete an observership at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. She held a research position for a year and a half at the University of Miami.

During her residency at University of Miami, Campos volunteered her time and medical expertise to help victims of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. "We provided care for as many as fifty patients per day in ten-hour shifts," she shares. "The UN was delivering food by helicopter. It was the most humbling experience I've ever had in my life."

Her volunteer work in Haiti was a continuation of a personal practice of charity and compassion. For ten years, from high school to the end of medical school, she volunteered to help people in poor local communities. "I would call companies and ask them to donate medications that were desperately needed by people living in the shantytowns of São Paulo," she says. "We distributed medicine, did cancer screenings and gave free talks in the community to educate people about cancer prevention. It was my first experience working with patients, and it revealed to me that you become family with patients as an oncologist."

Dr. Campos joins Ridley-Tree Cancer Center with a passion for women's health. She intends to leverage her expertise in breast cancer research to expand clinical trials and capabilities in Santa Barbara County. She also believes patients referred to Ridley-Tree oncologists benefit from a team approach from the very beginning of their care. "Patients meet their surgeon, oncologist and radiation specialist at the outset of treatment and get an overview of the plan for their care and treatment," she explains. "Working as a multidisciplinary team from the beginning of a patient's case, we are able to provide better communication and better care." Weekly conferences are held where all cases are discussed among the specialists. They have conversations with patients about treatment options and therapies.

The field of oncology has recently benefitted from advances and innovations that improve diagnostics and treatment of cancer. One such development is a diagnostic procedure for early-stage breast cancer called Oncotype DX, which assesses



“You become family with patients as an oncologist.”

— Maíra Campos, MD, MPH

gene expressions of known cancer-related genes to predict how likely breast cancer is to recur after treatment. “The Oncotype DX test provides information that can lead to more personalized treatment,” Dr. Campos explains. “It provides us with a better understanding of breast cancer so we may provide less aggressive treatment or therapy for patients who would truly benefit from it.”

Patients with certain types of cancer may benefit from a new procedure called immunotherapy, also known as immuno-oncology. Immunotherapy stimulates the immune system to improve its natural ability to fight cancer. “Moving forward, treatments such as immunotherapy enable us to provide cancer treatments that are more personalized for each tumor type and its characteristics instead of a one-size-fits-all approach such as chemotherapy,” Dr. Campos explains.

Walking the Path With Patients

“Advances in medical science enable us to walk the path with our patients to allow them to enjoy a quality of life and increased survival rates,” Dr. Campos says. “No matter what stage of cancer a patient has, when they walk through the door of our cancer center they can feel that they have a family here and are part of a team that they can relate to.”

Fluency in Spanish and Portuguese helps Dr. Campos relate directly with many of her patients for whom English is not their native language. “Oncology often involves difficult and complex discussions that are hard to accomplish through a translator,” she says. “Cultural nuance can be lost. My ability to communicate with Hispanic and Latino patients in their native language helps them feel loved and cared for. They are treated with dignity here. All people deserve the best cancer care no matter their circumstances or financial resources. From the primary care doctors working hard on prevention, to our specialty care, I am always very impressed with the high quality of care and focus on creating a healthier community.”

“It is gratifying to be able to walk this path where we are addressing the whole person,” Dr. Campos summarizes. “Cancer patients need time to talk about their life, not rushed through a fifteen-minute office visit. As a doctor, you can never lose track of the fact that you have a human being in front of you. I entered this profession because I love helping people feel better physically and emotionally. That’s why I love what I do.” 🌻

Maíra Campos, MD, MPH completed her hematology-oncology fellowship at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, and her internal medicine residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital at the University of Miami. She attended medical school and received her master’s degree in public health at ABC Foundation School of Medicine in São Paulo, Brazil. She joins Ridley-Tree Cancer Center at Sansum Clinic from the St. Charles Cancer Center in Bend, Oregon.

Dr. Campos lives in Santa Barbara with her husband and two children. She and her family volunteer their spare time delivering free meals to community members in need. She enjoys hiking and has a passion for rare plants.

Sansum Clinic Earns Breast Imaging Center of Excellence Designation



Sansum Clinic is being recognized for achieving the highest standard in women’s imaging. The Clinic’s Breast Imaging Program is now recognized as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence, a distinction awarded by the American College of Radiology (ACR.) This designation means that Sansum Clinic achieved accreditation by the ACR in stereotactic breast biopsy, breast ultrasound and ultrasound-guided breast biopsy, breast MRI and mammography. This signifies that the clinic provides these essential services to our community at the highest standards of the imaging profession.

“We are extremely proud of our team and of this designation, which means we offer the highest quality in breast imaging. It shows the immense commitment we have to our patients and to our community,” commented Winifred Leung, MD, Sansum Clinic’s fellowship-trained breast radiologist, and chair of the Santa Barbara Breast Care Alliance. 🌻

Board-Certified Radiologists Urge Women to Schedule Recommended Screenings

To schedule a breast screening appointment with Sansum Clinic at our 215 Pesetas Lane facility in Santa Barbara, visit imaging.sansumclinic.org or call (805) 681-7671. Some evening and Saturday appointments are available.

Assisting Patients

Medical Social Work Meet Christine Cruse

It is a long-established and successful practice to have social workers provide support to cancer patients. In recent years, Christine Cruse, LCSW, serves Sansum Clinic's general health patients and their families with support for their mental, emotional and social well-being, allowing them to focus on their health needs and goals.

For example, a patient may struggle with the decision to pay for medication or electricity. In many cases Christine can assist by finding resources to reduce medication cost as well as the cost of utilities, thus reducing stressors and allowing the patient to return their focus to their health. In addition to meeting basic needs such as food, medicine, clothing and shelter, Medical Social Work can also provide:

- Guidance and resources to help caregivers and to prevent burnout
- Assistance to find helpful clinic and community resources
- Help meeting treatment goals of complex health concerns
- Resources for mental health or counseling needs
- Planning for end of life including help completing advance directives

Increasingly, medicine is concerned with the social determinants of health (SDOH), which include the conditions where people live, learn, work and play and that affect health and quality of life. Medical Social Work is a key tool in addressing SDOH. Christine works closely with patients, their family members, caregivers and health care providers to develop a plan which serves as a road map to improving health and achieving personal goals.

Christine Cruse, LCSW, received her master of Social Work from CSU Long Beach and has more than 20 years' experience in hospital, hospice, home health, care management, adoption and with the chronically ill. Her goal is to help patients maintain or improve overall health and well-being. Appointments with Christine are free of charge to patients of Sansum Clinic and to the families and caregivers who support them. They can often be completed over the phone. Please call to schedule an appointment.

Medical Social Work: (805) 681-7580



Christine Cruse, LCSW, and
Sheila Millington

Health Resource Center Meet Sheila Millington

What does poison oak look like? How can I find a foot doctor? Where can I get a walker for my Mom? Sheila Millington in the Health Resource Center gives reliable answers to these questions and more. She provides healthy recipes, exercise guides, walking maps, information on clinic programs and community resources. As an Advance Care Planning Facilitator, Sheila also helps people complete their advance directives, the legal document that lets one choose the type of health care they want and designate who can speak for them if they can't speak for themselves.

Currently, the Center is closed to visitors, but available by phone or email. Read about the Center at [SansumClinic.org](https://www.SansumClinic.org) and send your question or give Sheila a call.

We look forward to hearing from you! 🌻

Health Resource Center: (805) 681-7672

Marilyn Gilbert

Legacy Society Member

Marilyn Gilbert is an 86 year-old force of nature. The former litigator is hardly content to rest and recline during her retirement years. She's moved on from her days of being "on stage" in a courtroom or a theater, but she still prefers to pack her days with plenty of stimulation and inspiration. Her passion projects are as varied as her interests, and the grandmother of 16 can still deftly command a team, whether her goal is to fundraise for a local charity or to support a cause dear to her heart. As of late, she's assembled a Sansum Clinic medical team to treat the health conditions she manages. "Each one of the doctors I interface with has such concern for me," describes Marilyn. "They follow the needs of their patients, and it's like I am part of the team, and we are all working together."

Marilyn's positive experiences with the Clinic span more than 40 years, and her appreciation for its benefits motivated her to become a member of the Legacy Society, a commitment to include Sansum Clinic in her estate plan.

During the 1950s, Marilyn would travel from Los Angeles with her first husband to visit Clinic doctor Casimir Domz, MD, who offered out-of-town patients a medical package that included exams across different specialties and lab work. "You could come up here and stay in a little hotel across the street from the Clinic. People would come from all over the country for this," Marilyn explains. Dr. Domz would later become Marilyn's longtime physician until he retired. When she and her second husband, Nathan Rundlett moved to Montecito, Dr. Kurt Ransohoff helped my mother when she was dying of heart failure. The sensitivity and compassion he showed during those years impressed Marilyn. Her choice to have him become her primary physician was a lifesaving one. "I felt death staring at me," she remembers. "I was fortunate, I lost my kidney, but I was alive." The regular communication by phone at that time, and now through MyChart messages, greatly comforts Marilyn and she appreciates the quick responses. More recently added to her physician roster is Rheumatologist Christian Powell, MD who treats her arthritis. "He's managed to get my body in shape where I do not even have osteoporosis," Marilyn boasts. Pulmonologist Bryan Garber, MD keeps watch on her lung disease, which she understands is incurable and progressive. For someone who has crooned with the likes of some incredible vocalists, Marilyn laments the impact her disease as had on her voice. "Luckily, I am mostly singing in my kitchen and in the shower right now," she jests.



Marilyn Gilbert at her Montecito home

The desire to give back and engage their community greatly enriched Marilyn and Nate's marriage. The couple founded Opera Santa Barbara in 1993, and spent decades taking part in performances together and hosting fundraisers at their home. At this stage of life and sharp as a tack, Marilyn is orchestrating her swan song. With the same plucky determination she used to prepare for her law cases or to gather up professionals for her opera company, she is making sure the people and projects she cares about will be taken care of when she is gone. This past year, she officially adopted all four of her stepchildren, so they could inherit the home their father lovingly built. Her promise to the Legacy Society, so others can receive the same excellent care she has, was an easy decision. She concludes, "This Clinic has kept me alive and feeling good, and kept me full of life." 🌻

If you wish to leave a gift or would like information about the Legacy Society, please contact Dru A. Hartley, Director of Philanthropy, at (805) 681-7726 or dhartley@sansumclinic.org.

Dear Friends,

For 100 years Sansum Clinic has been providing excellence in healthcare. We have played a leadership role in the community effort to administer COVID-19 vaccines to as many people as possible **AND** we have adapted to the major challenges we have experienced due to the pandemic, while still providing the full breadth and scope of healthcare services for our patients.



Kurt N. Ransohoff, MD, FACP, CEO & Chief Medical Officer, and
Marjorie Newman, MD, Medical Director

The cooperation and personal sacrifices of our physicians and staff since March 2020 have undoubtedly saved lives. There are hundreds of unsung heroes whose names you many never know, but whose masked faces you routinely see at Sansum Clinic and the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center.

We continue our work educating our community about the ever-changing pandemic and encouraging vaccinations in order to prevent illness and transmission of the virus to others. **Sansum Clinic has been doing double duty with flu shots and COVID-19 booster shots to ensure our patients are well taken care of during the upcoming flu season and protected during the ongoing pandemic fueled by the highly transmissible Delta variant.** The Delta variant, which is much more infectious than its ancestral strain, continues to put pressure on healthcare resources in the hospital and acute care/urgent care settings.

We anticipate that Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine

will soon be approved for younger children and we will be ready to expand our vaccine efforts to ensure the health and safety of our younger school age children. We anticipate having all formulations of vaccine on hand in order to meet the needs of all our patients, big and small.

The support we have received from our donors as well as local businesses has been gratifying. They believe in the critical role we play in providing healthcare to our community and value the work we do for our patients. That interest and generosity at the start of the pandemic warranted the establishment of the **Pandemic Relief Fund**.

Early in the pandemic that fund helped us purchase additional personal protective equipment and testing supplies so that we were able to perform essential testing. Funding from donors has enabled us to deal with the unique operational and staffing challenges the pandemic has posed.

We are at a critical point now, with the need to provide booster shots to our vaccinated patients and help vaccinate those not yet vaccinated. We are once again reaching out to our patients and the donor community to assist with the expenses related to our ongoing efforts to help end this pandemic.

While we don't have a crystal ball to forecast the future, we know that keeping our patients healthy and safe during COVID-19 will continue to be the main focus of our attention.

Despite the challenges that COVID-19 has presented for almost two years, the holidays remind us to pause and be grateful.

We are grateful to our dedicated physicians and staff for all they do, and will continue to do, for our patients and our wonderful community.

We are grateful to be able to keep our doors open for our patients because we know that many doors have closed and many businesses are still struggling.

Your philanthropic support will help meet the healthcare needs of our community.

Won't you join us today with a year-end gift to support our efforts?

As a nonprofit organization, your philanthropic support will make the critical difference in helping us to continue delivering the same high-quality healthcare we have provided for 100 years, regardless of any challenges we encounter.

Thank you for your consideration. To you and yours...*happy holidays* and remember that we are here for you. Please know that we are all still smiling under our masks. 🌻

Sincerely,



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



Marjorie Newman, MD
Medical Director

P.S. We are truly grateful for every gift we receive, no matter the amount.

If you prefer to give online, please visit www.sansumclinic.org/donate-now.

WE CARE Quarterly Awards

Patient Access Team

Sansum Clinic’s Patient Access Department received the first WE CARE Team Award of 2021. Karen Handy, MPH, Vice President of Operations, along with Medical Director Marjorie Newman, MD presented the award to Revenue Cycle Director Betty Lee, who received it alongside her managers at our Call Center. Patient Access has a team of more than 40 employees who became a frontline resource for patients during COVID-19.



Revenue Cycle Director Betty Lee with the Call Center team



(Left to right) Karen Handy, MPH, Vice President of Operations, with Betty Lee, Revenue Cycle Director, and Marjorie Newman, MD, Medical Director



Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine

Our Hitchcock Pediatrics Department received the second WE CARE Team Award of 2021, also presented by Karen Handy to Randi Rossi, Hitchcock Branch Manager and her hardworking team of more than 30 staff and providers, noting the extra reassurance and guidance they have offered to families and children throughout the pandemic.



(Left to right) Randi Rossi, Hitchcock Branch Manager, with Karen Handy, MPH, Vice President of Operations



Hitchcock Pediatrics Department

From a drive-thru vaccination clinic to appointments in outdoor tents, the Pediatrics team created a safe and welcoming environment to care for our youngest patients.



Outdoor vaccination tent at Pediatrics 🌻



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. The following recipients were awarded grants and scholarships in 2021 toward development in their respective fields and careers. These programs continue to make a direct impact on our community, offering the assistance deserving staff need in order to afford higher education, and by developing our next generation of leaders.

McNamara Fund Recipients:



Antonio Sanchez
Director of Operations
Administrative Patient Care Services
Pueblo Multi-Specialty Clinic



Cynthia (Cindy) Mathes
Registered Nurse, Quality Coordinator
Foothill Ambulatory Surgery Center



Estella Wu, PharmD, MS, BCPS
Manager, Oncology Pharmacist
Oncology Pharmacy
Ridley-Tree Cancer Center



Ignacio Meza
Manager
EHR Revenue Cycle Applications



Jodi Armstrong
Clinical Resource, RN Specialist
Urgent Care
Pesetas Multi-Specialty Clinic



Jose Diaz, Jr.
Application Analyst
EHR Revenue Cycle



Luz Contreras
Financial Counselor
Patient Business Services

Nursing Scholarship Recipients:



Christina Rodriguez
Registered Nurse Specialist
Oncology Infusion Center
Ridley-Tree Cancer Center



Elizabeth (Liz) Boccelli
Registered Nurse, Manager
Administrative Patient Care Services
Pesetas Multi-Specialty Clinic



Kara Lappico-Matejic
Registered Nurse Specialist
Neurology
Pueblo Multi-Specialty Clinic



Kimba Madsen
Registered Nurse Specialist
Oncology Infusion Center
Ridley-Tree Cancer Center



Suzanne (Michelle) Munoz
Registered Nurse Specialist
Oncology Infusion Center
Ridley-Tree Cancer Center

Special thanks to Dr. James and Chris McNamara for establishing the McNamara Fund for Professional Enrichment and Education, and to the many donors who have chosen to support the McNamara Fund. Nursing Scholarships are made possible through the generous support of John C. Mithun Foundation and Mithun Family Foundation.

Congratulations to all our 2021 award recipients. We're so proud of you and greatly appreciate the investment you are making towards your career and the health and well-being of our patients and the community we serve. 🌟

Obstetrics & Gynecology Department

Delivering Excellence

in Women's Health Services



Physicians and Advance Practice Providers
Sansum Clinic OB/GYN Department

Having a baby is a positive and happy reason to need to visit the hospital. Expectant mothers and their visitors are generally excited and happy to be there for that occasion. The doctors and staff at Sansum Clinic Obstetrics and Gynecology Department appreciate the opportunity to bring joy into people's lives and help them through the process. The professionals at the department are also prepared for complications and challenges that can occur during pregnancy and childbirth, and they treat and monitor a wide variety of conditions related to female reproductive health, providing age-appropriate care to women from adolescents to older adults.

Doctors from the OB/GYN department rotate shifts at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital to bring approximately 100 new lives into the world per month. They provide comprehensive health services for women at their offices on West Pueblo Street in Santa Barbara, and at Foothill Surgery Center at Sansum Clinic on Foothill Road in Santa Barbara.

David Raphael, MD, FACOG has been on staff at the department for twenty-eight years. He explains the services they typically provide. "The needs are mostly based on the age of the patients," he says. "In the reproductive age group we help women with issues related to fertility, contraception, and disease prevention. And later, during menopause, we help with hormone deficiency symptoms." Doctors and advanced practice providers at the department also perform routine procedures such as cancer screening, pap smears, pelvic exams, and pelvic ultrasounds. They treat uterine fibroids, which are noncancerous growths of the uterus that often appear during childbearing years. They also diagnose other benign and malignant tumors on the ovaries and uterus.

The team is well-trained when conditions require surgical intervention. "Women can become severely anemic due to abnormal bleeding and may be functioning with half their normal blood count," Dr. Raphael continues. "That may

necessitate a hysterectomy, which is removal of the uterus. Alternatively, we have an effective procedure called uterine ablation that can help patients avoid a hysterectomy. It's an outpatient technique where we cauterize the lining of the uterus to stop any abnormal or menstrual bleeding without affecting the patient's hormones."

When a hysterectomy is required, doctors can leverage the latest advances in medical technology. Dr. Raphael and most of the other physicians at the department are skilled in robotic-assisted laparoscopic hysterectomy, which utilizes the da Vinci™ Surgical System. Interactive robotic arms hold graspers, scissors, 3-D cameras and other tools, and are controlled by the surgeon from a console. "The da Vinci system enables surgeons to perform with excellent precision and control, requiring only a few small incisions," Dr. Raphael says. "The doctors in our department prefer it because it provides easier instrument manipulation and visualization while being minimally invasive. It has significantly changed our experience in the operating room."

Ultrasound is another essential technology used by the department throughout pregnancy to diagnose growths on the ovaries and the uterus. If information or visualization is needed beyond what ultrasound can provide, the team can send patients to Sansum Clinic Radiology Department for an MRI or CT scan.

Heather Terbell, MD, FACOG says the OB/GYN doctors frequently assume the role of educator and counselor for their patients during clinical visits. "Often we need to help women through issues that may be difficult for them to talk about," she explains. "Depending on their upbringing, some women are very familiar with how their bodies work, while others are ashamed, embarrassed, or don't know their anatomy."

Dr. Terbell says that while having babies is the most natural thing in the world, complications can occur during pregnancy and childbirth. "We are prepared for anything," she says.



Dr. David Raphael delivered baby Jonah Foley on October 3, 2021

"Things have gotten more high-tech, so computerized safety monitoring and record keeping are now standard. Also, advances in medical technology and knowledge have improved maternal and neonatal outcomes."

Scientific developments reduce many risks in obstetrics, but they can introduce other challenges. Innovations

in reproductive technologies enable older women to have babies. Older mothers have a higher possibility of pregnancy-related complications. Procedures such as in vitro fertilization contribute to an increase in the incidence of twins, triplets, and other multiple-birth babies. Multiple-pregnancy babies have a higher risk of being born prematurely, having a low birth weight, and other problems. "The risks are shifting," Dr. Terbell continues. "The goal is a healthy mom and a healthy baby."

Sometimes a mom will bring her teenage daughter in to discuss topics from first periods to first sexual encounters. "There are a lot of misconceptions about women's health in mainstream culture, and we dispel them," Dr. Terbell continues. "Patients trust us to provide accurate information and clarity. Women need to know how their bodies work and what their choices are. I want everyone to have a healthy body image and a healthy understanding."

"Women need to know how their bodies work and what their choices are."

– Heather Terbell, MD, FACOG

When Dr. Terbell was a student, she thought she would end up in the humanities as a theater major or an English major, but in college, she experienced a strong pull toward science. "My father had been sick my whole life, so I realized I wanted to be in a helping profession," she shares. "In medical school, I planned to go into emergency medicine, as we see glamorized on TV, but in my first rotation as a third-year medical student, I delivered a baby all by myself, and I was hooked. Taking care of women is where my heart is now. I support women through some of the most exciting but also the most challenging parts of life."

Dr. Raphael assumed he would be a pediatrician. "I had an interest in the sciences from an early age," he says. "My mother was a social worker and helped people on a regular basis, and I saw how satisfying it was for her. I spent a lot of time working with kids through various community programs, and I intended to specialize in pediatrics. Then I had a phenomenal rotation experience with the required OB/GYN module, and I saw how satisfying and exciting it was to be involved in people's lives when they were pregnant and giving birth. I really love the fact that the specialty involves a combination of medical activities for a wide range of patients."

Confidently Providing Care During Uncertain Times

Seven physicians anchor Sansum Clinic Obstetrics and Gynecology Department. Advanced practice providers, including three physician's assistants and one nurse practitioner, perform some of the annual care exams and routine procedures.

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Supporting Mothers Navigating Breastfeeding & Postpartum Wellness

BREASTFEEDING MEDICINE & LACTATION CONSULTING



(Left to right) Scheduler Sandra Alamillo, Dr. Katrina Mitchell, Registered Nurse Specialist Janin Avants, Medical Assistant Jessica Carmona

Sansum Clinic's Breastfeeding Medicine Program combines clinical expertise and personalized care to support mothers as they navigate breastfeeding. Our fellowship-trained breast surgeon and international board-certified lactation consultant, Katrina Mitchell, MD, IBCLC, PMH-C, provides one-on-one lactation consulting to help mothers gain confidence and overcome nursing challenges at any stage of their baby's development. 🌻

For more information, or to schedule
an appointment, call (805) 682-7302.
[Breastfeedingmedicine.sansumclinic.org](https://www.breastfeedingmedicine.sansumclinic.org)





“It is impossible to get through something like this without help. I had the best help, and I trust Dr. Mitchell completely. She really saved us.”

— Fey Machado, Mother of Lucca & Leo



“I thought I would give up on breastfeeding at one point since it was so overwhelming. Dr. Mitchell was amazing. I felt she could relate to me.”

— Jennifer Sawyers Pardue,
Mother of Asher

Breathe Free

Sansum Clinic's ENT Department

Enhances Patient Care with New Treatment

Take a deep breath through your nose and mouth. Let it out. Listen to the sounds around you. Smell the air. Make a vocal sound. We may sometimes take these abilities for granted. But people of all ages can develop conditions that affect normal functioning of the ears, nose and throat. Medical conditions that affect these areas impact the quality of life for patients and for those around them. An otolaryngologist, also known as an ear, nose and throat doctor or ENT, treats these conditions. Many common disorders can be successfully treated in the office or in outpatient surgery facilities without hospitalization or general anesthesia.

Rabindra A. Braganza, MD, FACS has been practicing as an ENT doctor at Sansum Clinic since 1992. Dr. Braganza and a team of physicians, audiologists and staff provide patient care at the ENT/Otolaryngology Department and at Sansum Clinic Foothill Surgery Center at Sansum Clinic in Santa Barbara.

Dr. Braganza and his family immigrated to the United States from Goa, India when he was 11. At age 18, a return trip to India to visit his grandfather who was a doctor there shifted his focus from engineering to medicine. "I had been accepted into the college of engineering at U.C. Berkeley," he says. "I was interested in knowing how mechanical things work. But as I browsed through my grandfather's medical books, I felt it would be much more interesting to learn how human physiology and biology work. That motivated me to shift my educational path."

A double major in biochemistry and psychology at Berkeley, he graduated with highest honors. In his first year, the intricate anatomy of the head and neck got him interested in ENT. Later at medical school, Dr. Braganza learned about different specialties. When he did his clinical rotation in otolaryngology, he saw the wide range of patients who were helped by ENT specialists, which further motivated him to become an ENT surgeon.

Dr. Braganza estimates that he has performed more than 9,000 surgeries in his career. New techniques and technological advances improve outcomes and help surgeons provide minimally invasive approaches to treatment. "We treat children and adults for a wide variety of conditions," he says. "In pediatrics, we treat chronic ear infections with ear tubes and perform tonsillectomies and adenoidectomies when they are blocking a child's airway or causing recurrent infections. We also treat a lot of surfers' ears where cold water and cold air cause bony growths known as exostoses that block the pathway of the ear canal. We drill those off using a microsurgical drill

under an operating microscope to restore the normal ear canal. This prevents water trapping and recurrent infections."

The doctors at the ENT department also treat tumors of the head and neck, which can be life threatening if cancerous. Many of those require a surgical procedure such as a biopsy or removal of a cancerous growth to initiate treatment. They work closely with colleagues at the Ridley-Tree Cancer Center as patients may have to go on to receive chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

New Techniques Improve Outcomes *Chronic Nasal Congestion*

Sinusitis and allergic rhinitis involve inflammation of the mucous membranes that line the sinuses, and are among the most common conditions for which people see their primary care doctors. Most people have experienced these conditions, and know them as chronic nasal congestion, post-nasal drip, or simply a chronically runny nose. Nasal congestion is commonly caused by allergies, but there are non-allergic causes as well. Exposure to cigarette smoke, perfumes, fuel fumes, and other irritants can cause a runny nose, sneezing, and other symptoms. Allergy testing in those situations would show negative results, despite symptoms.

New technologies vastly improve today's treatment options for chronic nasal congestion. "We have benefitted from a new technique called image-guided surgery," Dr. Braganza explains. "The sinuses are located between the eyes and the brain and are operated on with an endoscope. These days a high-resolution CT scan performed on the patient prior to surgery and used during surgery with a tracker device tells us exactly where the bony partitions that separate the eye and the brain from the sinuses are located. It allows us to perform more complete sinus surgeries with a greater margin of safety."

Other technological advances in the treatment of nasal congestion and drainage include radio frequency (RF) therapy and cryotherapy. With RF therapy, surgeons use heat generated by RF to shrink the tissues in the nose to open breathing pathways. RF is similar to microwave energy, but in a different area of the electromagnetic spectrum. RF therapy can also be used to ablate or block specific nerves along the brain/nose communication pathway to stop signals that generate mucus production. This can also be performed with cryosurgery, which uses very cold temperatures to zap the target nerves



Dr. Andrew Mester, Dr. Ashley Dunn and Dr. Rabindra Braganza

and change the communication pathways so less mucus is produced. Success rates for these new techniques are generally high, with approximately two-thirds of patients experiencing significant benefits.

Dr. Braganza says these procedures can often be done in the office, depending on the specifics of the patient's anatomy. "Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have moved more procedures into our office setting, with all the proper precautions," he explains. "Because of the pandemic, many operating rooms were shut down for months. For many procedures, patients don't necessarily have to go to a hospital operating room or undergo general anesthesia. This is more cost effective for the patients, and they can get back to their usual activities within a few days."

Snoring

Snoring is another common disorder that can be treated with an in-office procedure. "This is a surgery that has a very high success rate for improving the quality of life for a patient and also for the people around them," Dr. Braganza says. "Patients thank us because they can return to sleeping in the same bed with their partner and both can get a good night's rest."

Snoring surgery is focused on the soft palate and the uvula. "Patients must be selected appropriately," Braganza continues. "Most snoring comes from the palate and uvula, the flimsy narrow piece of soft tissue that hangs at the back of the throat. Under local anesthesia, we use a carbon dioxide laser to make cuts that decrease the size of the uvula and create cuts in the soft palate that generate beneficial scarring to stiffen the palate. For properly selected patients, we get about an eighty-five percent success rate from this technique."

Balloon Sinuplasty

Patients diagnosed with chronic sinusitis may be candidates for balloon sinuplasty, an innovative procedure used for the treatment of blocked sinuses. Balloon sinuplasty does not require incisions or the removal of bone and tissue. "A medical balloon is used to dilate the opening between certain sinuses and the nose to allow the sinuses to drain better," Dr. Braganza explains. "In selected patients it may be done as an office procedure in an outpatient setting, using local anesthesia. However it can't be used in all the sinuses nor is it used if there are polyps." The success rate for this procedure is similar to that of traditional endoscopic sinus surgery that is performed in an operating room.

A personal note sent to Dr. Braganza from one of his patients illustrates the impact of the care the doctor provides:

April 2020

Dr. Braganza,

Every morning I wake up, and take a deep breath through my nose, and say: "Thank you Dr. Braganza." Especially now in springtime allergy season, I really appreciate and am grateful for all the blooms. Thank you for being a healer.

"Reflecting back, it's a great feeling to have had a positive impact on individuals and on the people around them," Dr. Braganza summarizes. "Sometimes it turns out that I have treated three generations of the same family. While it is always gratifying to be thanked for saving a patient's life with a cancer surgery, it is also satisfying and somewhat amusing to hear from patients that they think of me when they wake up in the morning and are able to breathe through their nose and smell the coffee. I'm proud of the entire ENT staff and our ability to help the Santa Barbara community through the wide range of treatment options we offer."

—grateful patient, B.S.



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Everything Has Become Easier

Tom Cantella Dropped 40 Pounds and Resolved Multiple Medical Issues through the Doctors' Weight Management Program

Since its inception in 1986, the Doctors' Weight Management Program, our medically supervised, behavior based weight loss program, has helped thousands of people successfully take off weight and gain health. The program partners with HMR, Health Management Resources, who supplies participants with a menu of meal replacement products for a structured but simple and nutritious diet plan.

The program is divided into two parts: Phase 1 focuses on fast and healthy weight loss. Phase 2 is where people work on weight management – learning how to keep that weight off forever! In February, we had the pleasure of sitting down (virtually) with Tom, one of our Phase 2 participants, to hear about his success with managing his weight loss that he achieved in Phase 1. From joining the program in the middle of a pandemic to experiencing new adventures in a healthier, happier body, he is certainly making the most of what the Doctors' Weight Management Program (DWMP) offers. We hope you enjoy his story!



Before



After

DWMP: HOW DID YOU FIRST GET CONNECTED WITH THE DOCTORS' WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM?

TOM: I was starting to have some health issues and knew I wanted to make a change. My wife, Valerie, had gone through the program and thought it might be something that would work for me. Other diets had brought temporary weight loss and she said DWMP/HMR wasn't just another diet, but a complete lifestyle change. I decided I had nothing to lose and everything to gain!

DWMP: YOU BEGAN YOUR DWMP JOURNEY AT THE START OF 2020, WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE AN UNPREDICTABLE YEAR. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF MANAGING YOUR WEIGHT IN A PANDEMIC?

TOM: Times of crisis or uncertainty can be seen as challenges or opportunities. Because I was 'All In' in my pursuit of optimal health, I looked for the things I did have control over to make positive improvements. Being home allowed me to focus on menu planning and food prep because there were no outside temptations of dining out in restaurants or attending parties,

etc. I started running outdoors because my weekly basketball games at the YMCA were no longer an option. I now run or walk almost every day of the week. I also started listening to various podcasts on health and fitness that complement the DWMP/HMR approach.

DWMP: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST USEFUL TOOLS, PRINCIPLES, OR STRATEGIES FROM PHASE 1 THAT YOU STILL USE IN PHASE 2?

TOM: I've learned to incorporate a variety of fruits and vegetables into my diet so that 80% of my meals are now plant-based. Mentally tracking my daily calorie consumption and reporting my numbers twice a week keeps me accountable. Movement and exercise are a critical part of feeling good. Meal planning, food prep, and environmental control are also important components I've taken from Phase 1 into Phase 2.

DWMP: KEEPING WEIGHT OFF IS NOT EASY. HOW DO YOU RESPOND WHEN THINGS GET DIFFICULT- WHEN YOU ARE REALLY TEMPTED BY SOME UNHEALTHY FOOD OR YOU NOTICE THE NUMBER ON THE SCALE STARTS CREEPING UPWARD?

TOM: As my health coach Jordan says, "You can do hard things." My personal experience is that I can do hard things, and I have. I got sober through a 12-step program in 2015 and it's the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. So I knew if I applied the same level of determination and focus to DWMP/HMR, I could achieve my weight loss goals. When I am facing temptations or an uptick on the scale, I know I can go back to Healthy Solutions or Decision-Free, and I'm constantly exploring healthy snack alternatives like yogurt and fruit instead of chocolate, doughnuts or cookies.

DWMP: HOW HAS YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE CHANGED SINCE LOSING WEIGHT AND KEEPING IT OFF? ARE THERE ANY ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS YOU HAVE PARTICULARLY ENJOYED AS A RESULT OF BEING 40 POUNDS LIGHTER?

TOM: With the weight loss, everything has become easier – from tying my shoes to running on the beach – things I could never do comfortably before. I've always loved the beach. Feeling comfortable in a bathing suit is something I haven't felt in many years, and now I do. Travel is easier. My sleep is better. My blood pressure and cholesterol numbers have come way down, and my wife hasn't complained about my snoring in a long time.

This summer I'm planning a backcountry trip on horseback with my son, and the weight limit is 200 pounds. I wouldn't have been able to experience this adventure with him if I hadn't found DWMP/HMR and lost the weight.



Tom Cantella comfortable in a bathing suit after many years

DWMP: WHICH SNACK, PIECE OF EXERCISE EQUIPMENT, OR KITCHEN GADGET IS ONE USEFUL TOOL THAT YOU THINK EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

TOM: By far, the air fryer is the best piece of equipment we've added to our kitchen. We have used it almost every day for the last 10 months and love making broccoli, cauliflower, onions, sweet potatoes, green beans, and more in it. Definitely a good investment and an extremely useful tool for healthy meal preparation.

Thank you, Tom, for taking the time to share your story with all of us. We are so grateful to work with you, so delighted with your progress, and we wish you all the best on your horseback adventure this summer. Giddy up! 🌻

To schedule an appointment with Sansum Clinic's Doctors' Weight Management Program, please call (805) 563-6190.

Visit online at:
www.sansumclinic.org/doctors-weight-management-program

Part of the Community Conversation About Health



Sansum Clinic has been honored with SEE International's 2021 Humanitarian Award for the category of Community Partner.



Dr. David Fisk, Infectious Disease Specialist, was recognized as the Champion of Immunology in the *Pacific Coast Business Times* 2021 Healthcare Champion special issue.



Dr. Alex Koper, Urologist, was recognized as Physician of the Year in Santa Barbara County by the Central Coast Medical Association.



Barbara Conviser, Director of Population Health and Decision Support, represented Sansum Clinic on the Santa Barbara Women in STEM virtual panel event, titled "Women in Healthcare – Experiences and Challenges."



Ophthalmologists **Dr. Mark Silverberg** and **Dr. Mica Bergman** had an article published in the journal *Strabismus* which detailed a novel procedure to help patients with severe double vision.

Sansum Clinic physicians swept the Best Doctors categories in the *Santa Barbara Independent's* annual "Best Of" edition



Best General Practitioner – **Dr. David Phreaner**
Runner up – **Dr. Liana Gonzalez**



Best Pediatrician – **Dr. Saida Hamdani**
Runner up – **Dr. Jerold Black**



Registered Dietitian **Gerri French** was recognized in *Today's Dietitian* for her extensive work and long career connecting farm to table for the health of her patients and the community. 🌻

Welcome New Providers



ARISTIDES AVGERIS, MD



OLIVIA BAJOR, DO



MAÍRA CAMPOS, MD



JESSICA DAVIS, NP



THAIDRA GAUFIN, MD



BENJAMIN HASSAN, MD

Ari Avgeris, MD, board certified in family medicine, joined the Goleta Family Practice location in May of this year. Dr. Avgeris earned his medical degree from George's University in Grenada. He completed his family medicine residency at the University of Wisconsin, and his Hospital Medicine fellowship at Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio. He held positions as a professor and Director of Medical Student Education at Virginia Tech. Prior to joining Sansum Clinic, Dr. Avgeris worked at Lompoc Valley Medical Center and Cottage Hospital.

Olivia Bajor, DO, board certified in osteopathic medicine, joined the Goleta Family Practice location in September of 2021. Dr. Bajor earned her medical degree from Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California. She completed her family practice internship and residency at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. She returns to her hometown from Kaiser Permanente in the Coachella Valley.

Maíra Campos, MD, board certified in medical oncology, joined Ridley-Tree Cancer Center in August of 2021. Dr. Campos attended medical school and completed her Masters in Public Health at Faculdade de Medicina do ABC (ABC Foundation of Medicine) in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She completed her internal medicine residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital at the University of Miami, and her Hematology/Medical Oncology fellowship at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She joins Ridley-Tree from St. Charles Cancer Center in Bend, Oregon.

Jessica Davis, NP, joined Ridley-Tree Cancer Center's Medical Oncology Department in June of 2021. She earned her nursing degree from Columbia University, received her masters degree in nursing from UCLA, and completed her doctorate at the University of Colorado. She is a certified adult oncology nurse practitioner and an advanced-certified hospice and palliative care nurse practitioner. Prior to Ridley-Tree, Ms. Davis worked for a decade at the Rocky Mountain Cancer Center in Boulder, Colorado.

Thaidra Gaufin, MD, board-certified in internal medicine and infectious diseases, joined the Infectious Disease Department in July of 2021. Dr. Gaufin earned her medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine in Washington DC. She completed her internal medicine residency, and her internship at Olive View-UCLA Medical Center, and her infectious disease fellowship at the University of California, San Diego.

Benjamin Hassan, MD, board certified internist, joined the Internal Medicine Department in August of 2021. Dr. Hassan earned his medical degree from the University of Miami School of Medicine, and completed his internship and residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital. He's held previous positions with the Miami VA Healthcare system, the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, the Greater Los Angeles VA, and the St. Charles Healthcare System in Bend, Oregon, where we relocated from with his wife, Dr. Maíra Campos. 🌻

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- Connect to the outdoors!
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- Weight Loss Surgery Orientation
- WomenHeart Support Group
- Writing as a Tool for Health

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Call (805) 681-6599 for an in-person appointment.

Medical Social Worker
Get help with community resources, financial concerns, caregiver needs and complex care.
Call (805) 681-7580 for an appointment.

Prescription Navigator
Review your medications and make changes for safety, saving money and better health results.
Call (805) 898-3075 for an appointment.

More information at SansumClinic.org/health-and-wellness or call our Health and Wellness Directory at (866) 829-0909. 🌻

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Department office manager Rosa Booth directs logistics related to patient appointment flow, and she helped launch telehealth processes that enable the doctors to meet with patients without requiring in-person visits to the clinic. These practices have been crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I could not be more proud of our hardworking staff and their constant commitment to continue to deliver high-quality care to all our patients during such challenging times. They are true heroes!”

— Rosa Booth, Manager
Sansum Clinic Obstetrics & Gynecology

“The COVID-19 health crisis changed our workflow,” Dr. Terbell says. “People didn’t want to come to a medical facility where they feared people may be sick with coronavirus, and yet pregnancies continue and babies keep coming. Typically we see pregnant patients monthly so we can monitor the health of the baby and the mother. But we needed to pivot so we could provide the best care for people while following public health guidelines.”

Changes at the department during the COVID-19 pandemic initially included rescheduling non-essential routine procedures and annual well-visits. “Previously we had an extremely busy practice,” Dr. Terbell continues. “At that rate of turnaround, there wasn’t time to thoroughly implement the extra sanitation protocols that health officials recommended to mitigate the spread of the virus. We made changes so we could keep the waiting room sparsely populated. I started my day earlier so we could space out the appointments.”

Dr. Raphael says there was a lot of uncertainty in early 2020 when the first wave of COVID-19 infections impacted the community. “It feels like a lifetime ago,” he says. “So much has changed and evolved. At first, we had to shut down for anything that was not an emergency. We did a fair amount of telehealth where we spoke with patients over Zoom video meetings. That has been helpful for maintaining a level of care and continuity with patients, but obstetrics is different from some other medical specialties. We need to be with the patient to listen to the fetal heartbeat, measure the mother’s abdomen, check blood pressure, and other things that can’t be done online.”

“Telehealth isn’t as well suited for our specialty as it is for others,” Dr. Terbell concurs. “However, sometimes the ability for a patient to simply check in with us on video can be very beneficial psychologically. It can also be helpful with follow-up appointments so we can ensure patients are feeling well

after a procedure or that a prescribed medication is well-tolerated and effective.”

Members of the OB/GYN team ensured safety measures were in place to prevent the spread of the virus, enabling the department to continue to provide health services to the community. “We created a safe environment so patients felt comfortable coming to our office,” Dr. Raphael says. “We implemented temperature checks, patient screening protocols, plastic partition barriers, and social distancing guides. We all wore N95 masks and spent longer sterilizing exam rooms.”

While these measures fostered a high level of confidence about safety at the clinic, the doctors initially felt less secure about conditions in hospital delivery rooms. Women in labor breathe hard, and doctors are in very close proximity to them when delivering a baby. “Patients giving birth are pushing and blowing intensely,” Dr. Raphael says. “In the early stages of the pandemic, nobody knew how safe that was going to be. There was no reference. We were learning on the job. We wore our N95 masks and gloves and we washed our hands, but we

Obstetrics & Gynecology Department

PHYSICIANS

Carin Craig, MD, FACOG

Charmian Dresel-Velasquez, MD, FACOG

David Nomeland, MD, FACOG

David Raphael, MD, FACOG

Navi Reiners, MD, FACOG

Heather Terbell, MD, FACOG

Meghan Wallman, MD, FACOG

ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS

Joanna L. Gibbs, PA

Ashley McGrogan, PA-C

Heather Merrick, MPAS, PA-C

Wanda Westerman, NP, CNM

To make an appointment with one of our providers, log into MyChart or call the OB/GYN Department directly at (805) 681-8911.

constantly worried about catching the virus. Some doctors slept in their garage to avoid potentially infecting family members. It was an extremely stressful time.”

Anxiety decreased as COVID-19 testing became standard for all patients and staff who entered Cottage Hospital. Thanks to protective measures, department staff remained healthy. “I don’t know of anybody in my office or at the hospital who contracted coronavirus while caring for our obstetrics and gynecology patients,” Dr. Raphael continues. “I believe mask wearing and testing were significant factors in prevention.”

Dr. Terbell describes other pandemic-related challenges at the hospital that emphasize the interactive personal component of the services the doctors provide. “When a doctor enters the waiting room after a medical procedure, friends and family of the patient always look at the expression on the doctor’s face to quickly get an indication about the outcome,” she says. “Before the pandemic, I always made sure I entered the waiting room with a big smile on my face. Now we are wearing N95 masks all the time, so it’s harder to convey the message that everything’s fine. In the past, we hugged visitors or shook their hands to congratulate on the happy occasion of a birth. Now we avoid close contact. Throughout this crisis, the quality of medical care we provide remains excellent.”

The Value of Personalized Care

Looking ahead in the field of obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. Terbell believes better understanding of risks associated with genetic makeup will help improve practices. “Genetics is a burgeoning area of study that is leading to more personalized medical care,” she says. “When we know genetics may place a patient into a high-risk category for a disorder, we can tailor the care we provide. Advances in the field of genetic research may lead to improvement for issues such as early detection of ovarian cancer.”

As she considers the events of the past year, Dr. Terbell believes the COVID-19 health crisis has transformed public appreciation for science and medicine. “Prior to the pandemic, I observed a lot of doctor shopping and Dr. Google,” she says. “People did their own research and chose information sources based on how well they liked the answers. Then the pandemic hit and suddenly people appreciated science and valued the

knowledge of medical experts. It made me so proud to be a doctor. I felt grateful that I had a job where I was helping, in a time when circumstances made many people feel helpless. Patients thanked me for working during the pandemic. I think COVID has made us a little kinder as a society because we are all going through this together.”

Dr. Raphael reflects on twenty-eight years with Sansum Clinic. “I’m nearing the end of my career,” he says. “I have found it very satisfying. Sansum Clinic is a wonderful place to practice, and Santa Barbara is a phenomenal place to raise a family and have a great lifestyle. Delivering babies goes back thousands of years. Today sometimes technology helps, and sometimes it doesn’t. It comes down to the provider being involved in people’s lives at a momentous and joyous occasion. It’s that personal human connection that has made this career great.” 🌟



David Raphael, MD, FACOG, joined Sansum Clinic staff in 1993. He graduated from University of Southern California Medical School and is certified with American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He is the department chair for Sansum Clinic Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Raphael is very involved in the Jewish community and is the primary Mohel in Santa Barbara. He lives on the Mesa with his wife Lisa. They have two dogs and three adult children.



Heather Terbell, MD, FACOG, joined Sansum Clinic staff in 2005. She graduated from University of Southern California Medical School and is certified with American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She is currently the vice chairperson for the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital and serves on the advisory board for Postpartum Education for Parents (PEP). For fun, Dr. Terbell performs improvisational comedy with Santa Barbara Improv. She and her husband have three children, a dog, and a bunch of chickens.

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Meeting Patient Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The staff at the ENT department remained courageously dedicated to providing excellent care for patients through the early stages of the pandemic when so much was uncertain, and continues today. “I was so appreciative of all the members of the staff and the work they performed,” Dr. Braganza says. “The situation was especially worrisome early on, in the days before routine testing and vaccinations. All of our staff

continued to come to work to keep providing ENT care to our patients, despite the personal risk of exposure to COVID. We have made it as safe as possible for them and for patients. My advice to the Santa Barbara population about COVID is simple: It’s masks and vaccinations. That’s pretty much the only way out of this crisis. They are not going to cure the problem, but they are the best options to decrease the number of people from dying from COVID.” 🌟

To make an appointment with the ENT/Otolaryngology Department, log into MyChart or call (805) 681-7636.

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