Big Plans for the New Year

As we close out 2021 and make way for 2022, SYTHC has several points of exciting news to share!

**Productivity:** 2021 proved to be one of the most productive years in the clinic’s history. Specific data is provided on the following pages.

**Expanded Access to Services:** By the end of March, the clinic plans to expand its hours of operation by two evenings per week to 8 pm and on Saturday mornings from 8 am to noon.

**Phone System:** We heard you! After so many customer service issues due to our current system, SYTHC will be acquiring a new phone system that will better serve the needs of our patients.

**Electronic Health Record:** The current Electronic Health Record (EHR) used at SYTHC has proven to be less than we had hoped. Therefore, during 2022, SYTHC will be assessing our current EHR as well as others to see which system best meets our needs. We hope to go with a more efficient system by the end of the coming year.

**Clinical Department Changes:** Dr. Katya Adachi Serrano and Dr. Krista Armenta-Belen will be stepping down from their respective positions of Medical Director and Behavioral Health Director at the end of 2021. We are very fortunate that both will continue on at SYTHC in provider roles in 2022. On January 5, 2022, Noemi “Mimi” Doohan, MD, PhD, MPH will become Medical Director for the Clinic. Mimi comes to us with outstanding experience as a family physician, residency director, public health officer and researcher. We hope to have an announcement regarding the Behavioral Health Directorship in January.

Finally, I want to thank all of our SYTHC Team Members for their hard work, dedication and the quality care they have provided over the past year. I could not be prouder of the work this team accomplished during a time that presented so many challenges. I also want to express my gratitude to our patient community for your continued patronage during this time.

Happy Holidays, everyone!

Richard W. Matens, M.Div.
Chief Health Officer
Did you know, 2021 was designated as the International Year of Health and Care Workers (YHCW2021) by the World Health Organization? Our SYTHC staff members deserve that acknowledgment because of their endless dedication and hard work to meet the needs of our patients. We appreciate their unwavering commitment during some of our busiest months ever. Highlighted below is a breakdown of our productivity for the year.

**Highlights**

The Medical Department has seen 9,586 visits year to date. However, this does not include our nurse visits, which totaled another 4,468 visits. October 2021 was the highest producing month for Medical in the Clinic’s history, with a total of 1,179 visits. This was an increase of 32% from October 2020.

![Medical Visits 2021](image)

The Behavioral Health Department has seen 4,326 visits year to date. July 2021 was the highest producing month for Behavioral Health in the Clinic’s history. Its 465 visits represented a 30% increase from July 2020. Behavioral Health services have been the champions for telemedicine. Since the pandemic started, their productivity has only grown each month with minimal cancellations or no-shows.

![Behavioral Health Visits 2021](image)
The Year in Review

The Dental Department has seen 4,693 visits year to date. June 2021 was the highest producing month for this year, with 525 visits. This was an increase of 54% from June 2020. When the pandemic hit, Dental was forced to stop all procedures and limit the services they could provide due to the American Dental Association recommendation. Dental services were viewed as high risk because of the aerosol procedures. Our Dental Department has been working their way back to normal production this year.

It is a Team effort here at the Clinic. Without our support staff, our providers could not do what they do for our patients. We will continue to strive to meet the needs of our growing population. We increased our Clinical visits so far this year to 18,605, up from 15,457 for the same timeframe in 2020. This number is in addition to the 4,469 Nurse Only visits during 2021, which brings our total patient contacts to 23,073 for the current year. In 2021, we grew 18% with an active patient population of 7,538. The numbers speak for themselves, SYTHC staff members have been busy in 2021.
Many people report difficulty with sleep and feelings of fatigue, especially as we transition into darker winter months. In fact, 30% of Americans suffer from insomnia and 25 million U.S. adults suffer from sleep apnea - that is a large portion of the population experiencing sleep problems. Luckily, there are things we can do to sleep better. Here are a few things to consider:

- **CAFFEINE** intake: as a stimulant, caffeine causes the brain to be activated and interferes with sleep. Consuming large amounts of caffeine or having it later in the day may be interfering with your ability to fall asleep. Common caffeine sources include coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, chocolate, and medications (including pain relievers).

- **ALCOHOL** intake: Some people find that if they drink alcohol around bedtime they can fall asleep quickly; it is a depressant and slows our brain activity. Unfortunately, alcohol often causes night-time waking and interferes with your quality of sleep, which often results in waking up feeling unrested or with a headache. Consider avoiding alcohol within 4 hours of bedtime.

- **ELECTRONICS**: Light generated by computers and cell phones interfere with our body’s natural sleep-wake cycle and is the most common factor that affects sleep for youth and young adults. In order to limit the interference with our circadian rhythm, think about trying to turn off electronics 30 minutes or more before bed.

- **STRESS**: Perhaps thoughts are the main challenge you find keeping you up. Whether you feel anxious, worried, stressed, or even excited this can impair your ability to calm your mind down and prepare for sleep. Working on creating a bedtime routine that includes activities that make you feel calm and relaxed is helpful for many people. If you find that you always worry at bedtime, you can try to designate a specific time during the day to write down these worries and get the thoughts “out” to help contain them to the specific time that does not interfere with sleep.

Overall, we are finding that the world we live in never stops and it can be difficult to get everything we want done by the end of each day. It may seem like a conflict to stop doing those things and break for sleep, but when we are well rested, our time awake is often more productive and more efficient. Wondering how much sleep is recommended for your health? Below are the CDC’s numbers, broken down by age, to help you consider how much sleep you may want to work towards.
Healthy Holiday Teeth!

ON THE 12TH DAY OF CHRISTMAS, MY DENTIST GAVE TO ME... A HANDY GUIDE TO HEALTHY HOLIDAY TEETH!

Day 1: Beware of the buffet: If you find yourself snacking during holiday gatherings, try to choose tooth-friendly options such as raw veggies or cheese.

Day 2: Don’t brush after bubbly: When enjoying a glass (or two) of wine or other acidic beverages (sodas, cider), make sure to wait at least one hour before brushing your teeth to reduce enamel wear.

Day 3: Toys instead of treats: Swap the candy-filled advent calendars for a countdown full of fun family games, jokes, or puzzle activities.

Day 4: Carol as you clean: Hum a few verses of your favorite holiday songs while you clean your teeth, to hit your two-minute brushing target.

Day 5: Don’t use your teeth as tools: Don’t use your teeth to rip open presents, tear off labels, or cut tape!

Day 6: Take more turkey: Turkey is actually one of the healthier festive foods for our teeth; the meat contains phosphorous, which strengthens your teeth and bones.

Day 7: Keep drinking water: Drink water throughout the day to rinse food particles and bacteria from your mouth and reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Day 8: Choose dark chocolate over sticky toffee: Avoid hard candies that may crack teeth or sticky candies/toffees that stay in your mouth for extended periods of time.

Day 9: Watch your wine glass: Keep an eye on your surroundings if you are raising a glass to your lips/teeth in a crowded area.

Day 10: Don’t forget your regular routine: The holidays can throw off everyone’s schedules, but don’t neglect your hygiene routine.

Day 11: Pack your toothbrush: Don’t forget to pack your toothbrush, toothpaste, floss and fluoride mouthwash for your holiday trips.

Day 12: Make a check-up appointment: Start 2022 on a positive note by scheduling your annual dental exam at SYTHC!
As the holidays and new year are around the corner, we want to encourage everyone to have safe and healthy holidays. This includes safe consumption of alcohol.

**What is safe drinking?** Safe drinking is consumption of alcohol in a way that does not negatively impact health, safety, relationships, responsibilities, or functioning. Moderate alcohol use for healthy adults generally means up to one drink a day for women and up to two drinks a day for men. Examples of one drink include:

- Beer: 12 fluid ounces
- Wine: 5 fluid ounces
- Liquor (80 proof): 1.5 fluid ounces

**What is unsafe drinking?** Unsafe drinking is consumption of alcohol in a way that does negatively impact or put at risk one's health, safety, relationships, responsibilities, or functioning. This includes making risky choices and driving while under the influence of alcohol.

**What is excessive drinking?**

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**Normalization of Excessive or Unsafe drinking:** For many people, these limits may seem surprising. If you’re thinking “but I drink 4-5 drinks on a normal night and I’m fine” or “that’s just a good party,” while these thoughts may very well be true, they may also be a sign that excessive or unsafe drinking has been normalized for you. While 80% of adults in the US have ever used alcohol, 30% of Americans don’t regularly use alcohol. Of adults who do drink, the typical amount is 3 drinks per week. Meanwhile, 24% of adults reported heavy drinking in the past month and the top 10% of adults who drink alcohol consume over 10 drinks per day. 29% of adults have met criteria for an alcohol use disorder in their lifetime.

For some families or groups of people, excessive or unsafe drinking is more common such that it becomes something that is considered normal and is no longer recognized as excessive or unsafe. For some people, it can be difficult to recognize their own behaviors as unsafe, risky, or excessive, but they may have friends or family members notice and mention it. This can also be a sign of excessive or unsafe drinking.
What are the Health Risks from Excessive Alcohol use?

Short-Term Health Risks: Excessive alcohol use has immediate effects that increase the risk of many harmful health conditions. These are most often the result of binge drinking and include the following:

- Injuries, such as motor vehicle crashes, falls, drownings, and burns.
- Violence, including homicide, suicide, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence.
- Alcohol poisoning, a medical emergency that results from high blood alcohol levels.
- Risky sexual behaviors, including unprotected sex or sex with multiple partners. These behaviors can result in unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
- Miscarriage and stillbirth or fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) among pregnant women.

Long-Term Health Risks: Over time, excessive alcohol use can lead to the development of chronic diseases and other serious problems including:

- High blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, and digestive problems.
- Cancer of the breast, mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and colon.
- Learning and memory problems, including dementia and poor school performance.
- Mental health problems, including depression and anxiety.
- Social problems, including lost productivity, family problems, and unemployment.
- Alcohol dependence, or alcoholism.

Alcohol Poisoning: Someone with these life-threatening signs should be taken to the Emergency Room for treatment. If you recognize these signs in someone—get help immediately and call 911. If they are vomiting and unconscious or altered to the point that they can’t protect their own airway for breathing, turn them on their side (if it is safe to do so) as you wait for help to arrive. Life-Threatening Signs of Poisoning Include

- Inability to wake up
- Vomiting
- Slow breathing (fewer than 8 breaths per minute)
- Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- Seizures
- Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness

There are treatment options to help: If you or someone you love needs help with their drinking behaviors, SYTHC has options to help. There are medications that can help treat the cravings for alcohol and the physical symptoms that can occur with stopping alcohol (alcohol withdrawal) and using these medications can help someone quit drinking. This kind of treatment is available through our Medical Department at SYTHC. Our Behavioral Health team can offer counseling with a therapist, support from our substance use prevention counselor, or referral to specialty treatment. Call us at 805-688-7070 for more information or to schedule an appointment. Other local resources include:

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)  https://santabarbaraaa.com/  (805) 962-3332
- Al-Anon and Alateen  https://www.alanonsantabarbara.org/  (805) 569-1288
- SMART Recovery  https://local.smartrecovery.org/  (805) 886-1963
- LifeRing  https://lifering.org/  (800) 811-4142
- County ACCESS 24-Hour crisis line  (888) 868-1649

By choosing safe drinking, you can reduce the risk of these short- and long-term health risks of alcohol use. We hope everyone enjoys safe, healthy, and happy holidays and new years!
**5 Healthy Eating Tips for the Holidays**

Here’s your recipe for staying on track no matter what’s cooking.

’Tis the season for family, festivity, and food—lots of food. Temptations are everywhere, and parties and travel disrupt daily routines. What’s more, it all goes on for weeks.

How do you stick to your diabetes meal plan when everyone around you seems to be splurging? Here are 5 tips that can help:

1. **Holiday-Proof Your Plan**

   You may not be able to control what food you’re served, and you’re going to see other people eating tempting treats. Meet the challenges armed with a plan:

   - Eat close to your usual times to keep your blood sugar steady. If your meal is served later than normal, eat a small snack at your usual mealtime and eat a little less when dinner is served.
   - Invited to a party? Offer to bring a healthy dish along.
   - If you have a sweet treat, cut back on other carbs (like potatoes and bread) during the meal.
   - Don’t skip meals to save up for a feast. It will be harder to manage your blood sugar, and you’ll be really hungry and more likely to overeat. If you slip up, get right back to healthy eating with your next meal.
   - Have pumpkin pie instead of pecan pie. Even with a dollop of whipped cream, you’ll cut calories and sugar by at least a third.
   - Break physical activity up into smaller chunks so it’s easier to schedule, like walking 10 minutes several times a day.

   Schedule some “me” time every day—a nap, dog walk, or hot bath to get your energy back for the next celebration.

2. **Outsmart the Buffet**

   When you face a spread of delicious holiday food, make healthy choices easier:

   - Have a small plate of the foods you like best and then move away from the buffet table.
   - Start with vegetables to take the edge off your appetite.
   - Eat slowly. It takes at least 20 minutes for your brain to realize you’re full.
   - Avoid or limit alcohol. If you do have an alcoholic drink, have it with food. Alcohol can lower blood sugar and interact with diabetes medicines.

   Also plan to stay on top of your blood sugar. Check it more often during the holidays, and if you take medicine, ask your doctor if the amount needs to be adjusted.
Holiday Healthy Eating Tips

3. Fit in Favorites
No food is on the naughty list. Choose the dishes you really love and can’t get any other time of year, like Aunt Edna’s pumpkin pie. Slow down and savor a small serving, and make sure to count it in your meal plan.

If you plan for it, no food needs to be on the naughty list.

4. Keep Moving
You’ve got a lot on your plate this time of year, and physical activity can get crowded out. But being active is your secret holiday weapon; it can help make up for eating more than usual and reduce stress during this most stressful time of year. Get moving with friends and family, such as taking a walk after a holiday meal.

5. Get Your Zzz’s
Going out more and staying out later often means cutting back on sleep. Sleep loss can make it harder to manage your blood sugar, and when you’re sleep deprived you’ll tend to eat more and prefer high-fat, high-sugar food. Aim for 7 to 8 hours per night to guard against mindless eating.

Most of all, remember what the season is about—celebrating and connecting with the people you care about. When you focus more on the fun, it’s easier to focus less on the food.
2021-22 Patient Survey

SYTHC will be conducting its annual Patient Survey began on October 18th. When you visit the clinic, our Team Members will facilitate the survey that will cover the following 12 Questions.

1) What services do you receive at the Clinic? (Please select all that apply)
2) How did you find the experience of scheduling appointments?
3) How empathetic were our staff members to your needs?
4) How long did you have to wait until the provider attended to you?
5) How satisfied were you with your interaction with the provider you saw?
6) How easy is it to navigate our facility?
7) How satisfied are you with the cleanliness and appearance of our facility?
8) How would you rate the professionalism of our staff?
9) Was your provider able to address your concerns?
10) How likely are you to recommend the Clinic to your friends and family?
11) How would you rate the Clinic overall? (5 being the highest rating)
12) Are there things you feel we could improve upon? If so, please share them here.

We hope that you will please take the time to complete the survey to let us know how we can better serve our community.