

# Newsletter



July 2026

By Allie Pennington



**July has a way of making you stop for just a second.**

**Maybe it's the heat. Maybe it's the holiday. But something about this month invites you to look up from the day-to-day and notice what's actually around you.**

**This year, that pause means something a little more. Two hundred and fifty years ago, people made decisions, took risks, and built something they believed in. Not perfectly.**

**Not all at once. But generation by generation, one step at a time, something took shape.**

**That's not so different from what happens here every day.**

**Every phone call answered, every patient checked in, every room turned over, every schedule managed, every person who walks through our doors worried and leaves with a plan. That's not small work. That's the kind of work that helps people stay on their feet, keep working, chase their grandchildren, recover from something hard, and keep living the life they built.**

**We've cared for the feet that carry our communities forward.**

**All of us. Together.**

**I hope you take a moment to recognize the difference you make each and every day.**

## Healthy Living Focus: UV Safety

When you live in Texas, you already know the July sun is not playing around. It is not a gentle warmth. It is a full commitment from the sky the second you step outside. And with that kind of heat comes UV rays that are working just as hard as the temperature suggests.

Most people think about sunscreen the same way they think about an umbrella. You grab it when you know it is going to be a problem. The thing is, UV rays do not work that way. They are out there every day, whether you are outside for hours or just walking from your car into a building. By the time your skin tells you something went wrong, the damage is already done.



Sunscreen is not a one and done situation either. If you put it on at seven in the morning and call it good, you are unprotected by mid morning, especially in Texas July heat when you are sweating it off faster than you realize. The rule is reapply every two hours, and if you are sweating or in and out of water, sooner than that. SPF 30 or higher is the floor, not the goal.

Your eyes need the same protection, and this is the part most people skip entirely. UV exposure builds over time and contributes to cataracts and macular degeneration, which is a slow and largely preventable form of vision loss. Your sunglasses need to actually block UV rays to do the job. The label matters. Dark lenses without UV protection can make things worse because they allow your pupils to open up while still letting damage in.



Then there is the UV index, which is the number nobody looks at but everybody should. It runs from 1 to 11 plus. In Texas in July it regularly hits 8, 9, and 10. At a UV index of 8 or higher, unprotected skin can burn in less than fifteen minutes. That is a parking lot walk. That is a quick errand. That is a short stretch of time that adds up faster than people realize.

You do not have to avoid the sun entirely. Just go into it knowing what you are stepping into and take thirty seconds to protect yourself before you do.

### Wellness Spotlight: July is Social Wellness month

In a busy clinic, it is easy to slip into just get through the day mode. The schedule is full, the phones are ringing, and the next task is always waiting. Connection starts to feel like something you will get to later, when things slow down.



Things do not always slow down.

Social wellness is not a retreat or a team building exercise. It is what happens between the tasks. A real check-in with a coworker before the day gets away from you. A moment of patience when someone next to you is clearly running on empty. Asking for help before you hit the wall instead of after. Noticing the person beside you, not just the work in front of you.

None of us do this job alone, even when it feels that way. Every role here feeds into another. When communication is strong and people feel like someone actually has their back, the whole day runs differently. Not just for the team, but for every patient who walks through the door.

The small moments of connection are not extra. They are what hold the whole thing together.

## Living Well on Purpose—Not Just on Payday

You have built a budget. You know your numbers. You have been paying attention to where your money goes. Now there is one more thing worth doing, and it is not complicated. It is just not always easy.



Start an emergency fund. Not investing. Not retirement. Not a long-term plan that feels like it belongs to someone else's life. Just a buffer. A small cushion between you and the moment when something unexpected decides to show up, and it will show up.

The goal is not one thousand dollars. It is not three to six months of expenses, which is real advice that feels impossible when every dollar already has a job before it hits your account. The first goal is two hundred and fifty dollars. That is it.



One car repair. One ER copay. One thing that would otherwise go straight to a credit card or cause a bill to get missed. Ten dollars each paycheck gets you there in about six months. Twenty dollars gets you there in about three. It is not about the speed. It is about having something that is yours before life takes everything else. Then you go to five hundred. Then one month of expenses. But you do not start there.

You start at two hundred and fifty, and you protect it like it matters. Because it does. Put it somewhere separate from your checking account. A different bank if you can manage it. Not because you cannot be trusted, but because money that is easy to reach is easy to spend. Out of sight is not out of mind when it comes to your goals. It is how you keep them.



One flat tire should not turn into a missed bill. One unexpected expense should not send everything sideways. That is what two hundred and fifty dollars can do. It is not wealth. It is breathing room. And breathing room changes everything.

## Nutrition Corner: A Simple Upgraded Hot Dog Dinner

Several years ago, I started making hot dogs this way, and it has been the only way my family wants them ever since. My husband and son make them on their own now without needing to ask me how. That is honestly the highest compliment a recipe can get in my house.



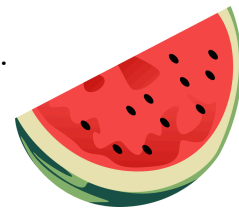
This is not a cookout hot dog. There is no grill, no charcoal, no standing outside in July heat trying to manage an open flame. This is a stovetop version that somehow tastes better than it has any right to, and it costs almost nothing to make.

Place your franks in a skillet and add enough water to come about one third of the way up the sides. Add a generous splash of Worcestershire sauce, then season with DASH Table Blend or salt and pepper to taste. Cook over medium to medium high heat and let it do its thing.

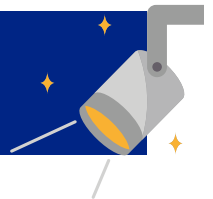
As the water cooks down, the sauce reduces and thickens, coating the franks with real flavor. They are usually done in about fifteen minutes. Serve on a bun with whatever toppings your people like. Chips on the side. A cold slice of watermelon if you can find one, and in Texas in July you usually can.

Watermelon is made up of more than 90 percent water, making it one of the easiest ways to add a little extra hydration during the hottest part of the summer. It is refreshing, naturally sweet, and pairs perfectly with this meal without feeling like you are trying to eat healthy.

Simple. Affordable. No oven. No grill required.



### Employee Spotlight



Four years ago, Dr. Ashley Varner joined Podiatry Associates of Texas and opened our Weatherford office. Two and a half years ago, Mineral Wells followed. Since then, she has helped grow not only two clinics, but also the teams and relationships that make them what they are today.

Dr. Varner is a DPM who takes her time with patients, talks with them, and genuinely wants them to leave understanding more than when they walked in. She has a particular passion for wound care, the kind of cases that require patience, precision, and a provider who does not give up on a patient easily. If you have worked alongside her, you already know she brings that same investment to the people on her team.

She is thoughtful, steady, and has a quiet sense of humor that shows up when you least expect it. She also happens to be the person who named the Lemon Deliciousness, which still makes us smile, and now want dessert.

This month, we thought you might enjoy getting to know the person behind the white coat a little better.



You've been practicing in Texas for years now, but you're a Michigan girl. What made Texas stick?

The weather made me move here and it keeps me here. I also love the southern hospitality and strong contrast the Detroit city life.

What do you love most about being an aunt? What do those kids think you do for a living?

I love loving on them like they are my own ( they are my sister just gave birth to them), giving them what ever their little hearts desire (within reason), spoil real good and send them home. The kids know I'm a foot doctor and that I help sick feet. They facetime me any time they have a foot... anything .

You have a reputation for having great taste. What is the one thing you will absolutely not compromise on, bougie or otherwise?

I will not compromise on are vacations. We stay in nice hotel and resort only.

Most people don't know that you and Dr. Salano share some genuinely strange coincidences. What's the one that still gets you?

Dr. Salano and I went to the same medical school in NYC. He was graduating and starting residency when I was starting medical. We did not know at the time that we had a mutual friend Candace. Over the summer he stayed at Candaces apartment for a short period of time while she was at an internship. During Canadace's intership I was introduced to her by a college friend of mine as she knew I would be starting at the school that candace was graduating from.



Candace became a mentor for me and helped me navigate the intimidating NYC. When it came to finding a place to live she suggested her apartment ( Salano had just moved out). I liked it and lived there the entire 4 years of medical school. It wasn't into years later that I realized Salano and I lived in the same apartment in NYC. Out of the millions of apartments we were in the same one ( that's crazy).

What does a really good day off look like for you?

Waking up at 7 am, nice cup of coffee while scrolling or watching the news, brunch at my favorite restaurant, catching a early evening movie and later dinner with drinks. I'm normally in bed by 10 pm lol.

What do you want the next chapter of this practice to look like and what's your role in building it?

The next chapter would include an expansion to serve more patients.

What do you wish your patients understood about you that they probably never would have guessed?

I treat my patients like they are my mother father, sister, brother friend. That comes with the good and the bad I'm harsh when I need to be, but I always operate from a place of genuine place of love.

### Learning Corner: Busy Is Not the Same as Productive

Have you ever finished a day completely exhausted, only to wonder what you actually accomplished? Most days in healthcare feel like that.

Being busy feels productive because there is always something happening. Emails to answer, phones ringing, rooms to turn over, problems to solve, people to help, and a steady flow of tasks that do not slow down. By the end of the day, you have been moving for hours.

But movement is not always progress.

The most effective days are not the ones where you stay the busiest. They are the ones where the right things actually get done.





That does not mean every day goes according to plan. Healthcare rarely works that way. There will always be interruptions, unexpected situations, and priorities that shift without warning.

The goal is not to do everything. The goal is to do the right things well.

Before your day gets away from you, ask yourself one simple question.



If I only get three things done today, what three things matter most?  
Everything else still matters. Those three things just become your anchor when the day starts pulling you in every direction.

Being busy is unavoidable. Being intentional is a choice.

### **A Note from the Owners and CarenetMSO**

July is a good month to stop and take stock of what you are part of. Two hundred and fifty years of this country being built one decision, one risk, one generation at a time. And right here, across four communities in North Texas, a team of people who show up every single day and make a difference for the patients who trust us with their care.

That is not a small thing. It is everything.

The second half of this year is going to be full. The schedules will stay busy, the days will be long, and there will be moments that test you. That is the nature of this work. The good news is, you have already proven you know how to meet those moments because you have been doing it all year.

Go into the second half with that same intention. Not just busy. Productive. Not just present.

Purposeful. Thank you for the care you give, the support you show one another, and the commitment you bring to this team every day. We are proud of what has been built here, and we do not take any of it for granted.

With appreciation,

Podiatry Associates of Texas Ownership and CareNet MSO