

Newsletter



September 2026

By Allie Pennington

In Texas, September means one thing before it means anything else.

Football is back.



And if you think about it, there is something almost poetic about the fact that the people who spend their days caring for feet and ankles work in the same state where football is practically a religion. We see what those sports do to a body up close. We also know better than most what it takes to stay on your feet through a long season.

Speaking of long seasons, this team just survived one. Triple digit heat, back to school chaos, full schedules, and everything in between. September is not exactly a break, but it is a shift. The air changes just enough to remind you that the year is turning and that the work you have been putting in all year is still showing up in everything you do.

Take that into this month. The pace is not slowing down, but you have earned your footing and that counts for something.

Now let's talk about staying healthy enough to enjoy the ride.

Healthy Living: Flu Season Is Coming and This Year It Matters More Than Usual

Most years the flu season reminder feels routine. Get your shot, wash your hands, stay home if you are sick. You already know that.

This year is worth paying a little more attention to.



For a clinical team, flu season is not abstract. You are already in close contact with patients every single day, many of whom are older, managing chronic conditions, or both. Protecting yourself is also protecting them.

If you have not gotten your flu shot yet, now is a good time to start thinking about it. It takes about two weeks to build full protection, and flu season does not wait for you to get around to it.

Beyond the shot, the basics still apply, but they are worth saying out loud. Wash your hands consistently, not just between patients but throughout the day. Stay home when you are actually sick, not almost better, actually better. Drink water, sleep, and give your immune system the support it needs to do its job.



This year, treat flu season like the real thing it is. Because it is.

Wellness Spotlight: The Shift You Almost Miss

September

Nobody announces the end of summer in Texas. It does not happen all at once.

But sometime in September, usually when you are not paying attention, something changes. The morning feels different. The air on your way to the car has just enough edge to it that you notice. The evenings get a little longer in the best way. And somewhere underneath all of it, your body lets out a breath it has been holding since June.

That shift is worth paying attention to because it is easy to miss when you are still moving at August pace.

Your body recalibrates with the seasons whether you give it permission to or not. Energy patterns change. Sleep gets easier or harder depending on how well you support the transition. Appetite shifts. Mood can shift too, sometimes toward more motivation and sometimes toward a kind of restlessness that does not have a name but feels familiar.

The best thing you can do in September is notice it. Not fix it, not optimize it, just notice what your body is actually doing as the season turns.

Are you sleeping better or worse than you were in August? Are you hungrier or less hungry? Do you have more energy in the mornings or the evenings? These are not trick questions. They are just good information about what your body needs right now.

September is a transition month. Give yourself the same grace you gave yourself in August and pay attention to what changes. Your body is telling you something. It usually is.



Financial Wellness: The Holidays Are Closer Than They Feel

September does not feel like a holiday month. That is exactly why it is the right time to talk about one.



The holidays are roughly twelve weeks away. That sounds like plenty of time until it is not. And the way most people experience the holidays financially is not from one big purchase that breaks the budget. It is from two months of small ones that sneak up and then a December that arrives before anything is ready.

This year can look different if you start now.



The first step is honest. What did last holiday season actually cost you? Not what you planned to spend. What you actually spent. Gifts, food, travel, decorations, the things you forgot to budget for and put on a card anyway. If you do not know the number, look back at your statements from November and December of last year. That number is your starting point.



The second step is simple. Divide whatever that number is by the paychecks you have between now and when you need the money. That is what you set aside each paycheck starting now. Even if the number feels small, it is more than zero and more than zero is how you arrive at December without the familiar sinking feeling.

A separate savings account works here for the same reason it works for the emergency fund. Money you can see and touch is money you spend. Money sitting in an account you do not check every day has a way of being there when you need it.

The holidays should feel like something to look forward to. Start now and they will.



Nutrition Corner: Bring the Tailgate Inside



Football season and food go together in a way that needs no explanation in Texas.

The only problem with tailgating is the part where you are standing in a parking lot in September heat waiting for the game to start. By late September the weather might cooperate. By early September it absolutely will not.

So, bring it inside!

An at home tailgate is not a lesser version. It is honestly better. Your couch is more comfortable than a folding chair. Your bathroom situation is significantly improved. And you control the food, which means it can actually be good.

Here is how I think about it. A tailgate spread is not one dish. It is a collection of things that work together and let people build their own plate. That is the whole concept, and it is one of the easiest ways to feed a group without cooking all day.

The anchors I would build around are something with protein, something crunchy, something for dipping, and something cold and refreshing. Everything else is optional.

For the protein, a crockpot is your best friend in September when the oven still feels like too much. A simple shredded chicken with your seasonings of choice goes into the crockpot in the morning and by game time it is done. Pile it on sliders, on nachos, in a wrap, or straight on a plate. It works everywhere.

For the crunch, chips are the obvious call. For the dip, a simple guacamole or a layered dip takes ten minutes to put together and disappears faster than anything else on the table. Keep it cold with a fruit tray or a veggie spread. Both travel well, require no cooking, and give people something to reach for between the heavier bites.

Set it all out and let people build their own. That is half the fun and none of the stress.



Employee Spotlight

For the last few months, we have turned the spotlight toward the people who helped build this practice and continue to lead it forward. This month, we are turning that spotlight back toward the people who make the day to day happen.

A practice is more than its doctors, its schedules, its phones, or the four walls of a clinic. It is the people who show up every day and make all of those things work.

This month, we are turning the spotlight toward three members of our team. Different roles. Different days. Different responsibilities. But each one is part of the same thing we are building here.

Jane Ng'ang'a

What part of your job do you think makes the biggest difference for patients or for the team?

I think the biggest difference I make is helping patients feel comfortable and taken care of. Sometimes just listening to them, answering their questions, or making sure they feel prepared for their appointment can make a big difference. I also enjoy supporting the provider and my coworkers so that everything runs smoothly. Knowing that I can make someone's day a little easier is what makes my job meaningful to me

What is one thing you wish people understood about what you actually do every day?

There's definitely more to it than just answering questions. You're constantly switching between scheduling, messages, and different patient situations, sometimes all at once. You have to stay patient, pay attention to the little details, and adjust depending on what each person needs. No two situations are exactly the same, so you really have to think on your feet and be ready for whatever comes next.

What has surprised you most about working here since you started?

How much I've grown without really noticing it. I've gotten better at multitasking and staying calm when things get busy. I feel like the skills I've picked up here have made me more confident in handling things outside of work too.

What do you do outside of work that most people here probably do not know about?

I love cooking. It's something I genuinely enjoy, especially when I have time to try something new. I also like watching movies and spending time with family.

What is it about this place that makes you want to show up every single day?

I enjoy the positive work environment, the people I work with, and knowing that the work I do makes a difference. It gives me a sense of purpose and makes me look forward to coming in every day.

Jacie Angelly

What part of your job do you think makes the biggest difference for patients or for the team?

I think the part of my job that makes the biggest difference for patients and the team is the energy and dad jokes I bring to work everyday. I never mind playing the supporting role, or honestly being thrown wherever is needed.



What is one thing you wish people understood about what you actually do every day?

One thing I wish people understood about what I actually do everyday is that even though we are on the subject of feet and feet may not be everyone's cup of tea that this field is so important, and it changes so many people's lives everyday. When patients ask me how i got into this line of work i always tell them, "I am honestly not sure but what I have learned is when it comes to this line of work is if you can do it, you should."

What has surprised you most about working here since you started?

The thing that has surprised me the most about working here is how important it actually is to take care of your feet, as someone who comes from working in restaurants only before this. Taking care of my feet was the last thing on my mind and I was on them constantly. I had absolutely no idea how important my feet truly are.

What do you do outside of work that most people here probably do not know about?

I am pretty much an open book, but I guess if I had to say one thing I do outside of work that no one knows would be, I LOVE to hike.. anywhere.. everywhere.. I love to find a place with a scenic view to sit down and read my book.

What is it about this place that makes you want to show up every single day?

There are many reasons I keep showing up to work everyday, the patients, the importance of the work but the number one reason I keep showing up is my coworkers, ever since day one I showed up and it felt like everyone had just welcomed me into their family. Each day coming to work is like a day with my dysfunctional family.

Tiffanie McNeal

What part of job makes biggest difference for patients?

I am the face patients see before the doctor. It is important to me to make the patient feel at ease and excited to see the doctor. Some patients are nervous or even scared to see the doctor. I serve as a buffer to help put patients at ease.

What is one thing I wish people understood about what I do everyday?

I wish people understood that I see many patients throughout the day and sometimes need to be reminded which foot we are talking about.





What has surprised me the most since I started?

I am most surprised by the ease and comfort I have taken in this job since I started. I feel like I've been doing this for years.

What do I do outside of work that most people don't know about?

When I'm not spending time with family, I bling, Also known as rhinestoning. I use a special glue to adhere 3mm rhinestones onto another object. Pens are my favorite thing to bring.

What is it about this place that makes me want to show up everyday?

I love helping people and showing up everyday let's me help as many people as I can.

Learning Corner: Do You Actually Know What You Think You Know?

Most of us learn something, use it enough to get comfortable, and then quietly stop checking whether we are still doing it right.

That is not laziness. It is just how habits work. Once something feels automatic, we stop questioning it. And that is exactly when small drifts start to happen without anyone noticing. In a clinical environment, that drift has consequences. A process that used to be followed completely gets followed mostly. A protocol that made sense when it was written gets interpreted loosely over time. A workflow that worked for three people gets stretched to cover six without anyone updating the steps.

None of it happens on purpose. It just happens.



The question worth asking this month is a simple one. When did you last actually verify that what you think you know matches what is currently correct?

Not rely on memory. Not go off of what you were told the first time. Actually check.

Pick one thing this month. One process, one protocol, one workflow that you do regularly and have not reviewed in a while. Look at it with fresh eyes. Check it against the current standard. Ask if there is a better way or if the way you are doing it has drifted from how it should be done. You might find out you have been doing it perfectly all along. That is a good thing to know.

You might find a small gap that is easy to close before it becomes a real problem. That is an even better thing to know.

The teams that stay sharp are not the ones who never make mistakes. They are the ones who keep checking.



A Note from the Owners and CarenetMSO

September is a good time to look ahead.

The year is moving quickly, and the months ahead will be full. The pace will stay steady, the schedules will stay busy, and there will be plenty to accomplish before we close the books on another year.

But busy is not new to this team. You know how to move through a full day, how to adapt when things change, and how to keep taking care of the people in front of you while everything else is moving around you.

As we move into the final months of the year, we want you to remember that the work you do matters. Every patient you help, every problem you solve, every phone call you answer, every person you support, it all adds up to something bigger than any one day.

We are proud of the practice we are building and even more proud of the people who make it what it is.

Keep moving forward. Keep looking out for each other. And keep doing the work the way you know it should be done.

We are grateful to be doing it with you.

With appreciation,
Podiatry Associates of Texas Owners and CareNet MSO