

# Stories FROM THE Heart



2021 Annual Report



**CAMARENA**  
HEALTH

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# A Letter From Our CEO

In 2021 I had the pleasure of witnessing our staff, clinicians, providers, volunteer program, and leadership work tirelessly alongside one another to ensure the health and well-being of our patients and communities. The year was not without its challenges, but there were some much-needed periods of relief along the continued roller coaster ride that we, and all in the medical field, continued to endure as we continued to provide care to our communities amid a pandemic.

At Camarena Health, we strive to carry out our core values of Honesty, Excellence, Accountability, Respect and Teamwork (H.E.A.R.T) in the work and care we provide our patients every day.

As you will see in this year's annual report, our dedicated team at Camarena Health continue to wear their hearts on their sleeve in every aspect of their work. I am very proud of our team in that while simultaneously dealing with the unexpected obstacles that the second year of a pandemic presented, they were able to accomplish such meaningful work and projects that contribute to a healthy and flourishing community.

This remarkable work and continued dedication by our staff truly highlights the fact that Camarena Health is in fact the Heart of Healthcare.

Paulo Soares  
Chief Executive Officer





# Recognizing our Board Members

The Board of Directors continued to be a beacon to Camarena Health's leadership and staff throughout 2021. They stayed committed to supporting and uplifting the work of Camarena Health while remaining focused on ensuring the community had access to care during challenging times. Through everything, the board carried out the mission of Camarena Health, and for that Camarena Health says "thank you" to its dedicated Board of Directors.



**Edgar Jimenez**  
President

**Patty Thompson**  
Vice-President

**Martha Cardona**  
Secretary

**Abimael Vargas**  
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Board Member

**David Loveall**  
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**Dr. Cecilia Massetti**  
Board Member



**Raquel Rodarte**  
Board Member

**Jutta Webb**  
Board Member

**Monic Asenjo-Wilhite**  
Board Member



# Stories From The Heart

**Every day, at Camarena Health, we hear stories. Stories of honesty, excellence, accountability, respect, and teamwork**

These stories are an essential part of providing care to our patients, impacting the community, and expanding access to care.

A mother who had difficulty bringing her children to a provider can now schedule appointments and receive care because we expanded our mobile health clinics in remote areas. A patient with type 2 diabetes who joined our diabetes support group through online sessions has regained her quality of life. A provider in Oakhurst, who is making it easier for patients suffering

from Hepatitis C to manage their condition and receive medications close to home.

It's stories like these that help us understand ourselves and improve care. Behind all the numbers, charts and statistics are stories of a life changed for the better. These stories are created every day at Camarena Health, and our hope is that these stories from 2021 will be remembered for years to come. These are the stories from the heart.









# 2021 Demographics



TOTAL EMPLOYEES

473



TOTAL REVENUE

\$64,438,045

TOTAL PATIENTS

55,118



57%

Female



43%

Male



67%

Latino



42%

Agricultural  
Worker



## Population by *Age Group*



**3,769**

0-5



**11,681**

6-17



**11,423**

18-29



**22,941**

30-64



**5,304**

65+

## TOTAL PATIENT ENCOUNTERS

**277,449**



**188,063**

Medical Visits



**9,506**

Vision Visits



**16,019**

Behavioral Health



**42,148**

Dental Visits



**5,010**

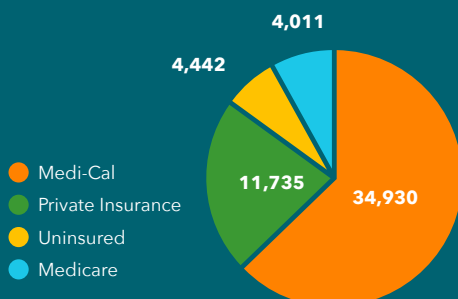
Chiropractic Visits



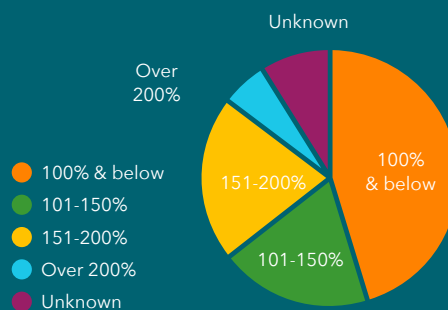
**16,703**

Enabling Visits

## Payment Source



## Federal Income Levels



The image features a vibrant green watermelon slice background with a pattern of dark green, pill-shaped seeds. A thin, curved orange line runs along the left edge of the watermelon. In the bottom right corner, a portion of a dark blue, textured fabric, likely a t-shirt, is visible. The word "Honesty" is written in a white, casual script font across the middle of the watermelon slice.

Honesty







# Reducing the Stigma of Mental Health

The worldwide conversation surrounding mental health has grown exponentially in the last decade and Camarena Health has been quick to adapt and expand its behavioral health services to meet the needs of the community. The most recent expansion has been in the form of the Camarena Health Behavioral Health Navigators program which launched in 2021.

The idea of the program dates back to 2020 when the Madera County Youth Behavioral Health Collaborative, a partnership of the Madera County Superintendent of Schools, Camarena Health, and Madera County Department of Behavioral Health received the Mental Health Student Services Act grant to fund the hiring of three behavioral health community navigators (BHCN), two behavioral health clinicians, and a program coordinator. In 2021, the Camarena Health Behavioral Health Navigators program hit the ground running.

Each community navigator is assigned to one of three regions within the county to ensure students and their families can access available

resources and treatment options, coordinate care, and serve as a liaison to school staff to ensure students have the school-based services they need to successfully return to and remain in class. The Licensed Clinical Social Workers provided behavioral health services designed to meet the students' needs. Whenever possible, they use interactive video and audio technology to provide support to school staff to de-escalate stressful situations and to develop preventative measures before a referral is made.

"Since the onset of the pandemic, we have seen an increase in mental health related issues impacting our students," said Camarena Health Director of Behavioral Health Rosalba Serrano Rivera. "We are hopeful with the MHSSA funds we will continue to provide the much-needed mental health services to our students, specifically to the students and families in our rural communities where mental health is difficult to access."





This program hits close to home for Behavioral Health Navigator Jonathan Del Toro. Del Toro originally started at Camarena Health as a behavioral health case manager and after a year transitioned into the new behavioral health navigator position. Being a Madera native, he was eager to help build the program from the ground up with his lived experiences in the community he grew up in.

"My favorite part about the job is knowing that we are making a positive impact here at our local schools and breaking the stigma behind mental health by providing education, awareness, and resources to students," said Del Toro. "My work has special meaning to me. I get to come to work every day knowing that the work we do and services we provide are making a difference at our local schools. Especially because we didn't have too many

services like this when I was a student here in Madera. Seeing how much our community has grown and flourished and knowing I can have a helping hand in this has made my work rewarding."

The Behavioral Health Navigators program is instrumental to increasing youth access to mental health services, identifying gaps in service to the targeted populations, and overall help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and distress. The presence of the program doesn't just offer expanded access to care, but also serves as a means of education to students, teachers, and administration in identifying distress situations which will in turn lead to earlier intervention and prevent crises. These ongoing and sustained services will continue to address students emotional and behavioral needs and aid them in achieving mental wellness and academic success.





## Fostering New Partnerships in

# Teaching

Camarena Health prides itself in its collaboration with various community partners. 2021 saw fruitful relationships emerge with three new partners that helped reach our community while educating the future of the healthcare workforce with in-house, hands-on experience at Camarena Health centers.

Camarena Health partnered with UCSF-Fresno to aid in their residency program. Camarena Health's Almond Health Center became the new home for four residents, two 2-year residents and two 4-year residents, and some teaching faculty. Providing family medicine equipped them with a well-rounded experience with a wide range of patients.

The pandemic posed a new problem of many students not finding placement for their residencies. Fresno Pacific University had a particularly difficult time finding placements for their students, but some of their nurse practitioners were able to be placed at Camarena Health's Country Club and Chowchilla Health centers which offered them an opportunity to

gain experience in a variety of clinical settings including family practice and women's health.

California Health Sciences University reached out to Camarena Health about providing a longitudinal experience for their students that would allow them to work on helping improve a health measure. Meeting certain health measures is what enables Camarena Health to hold certain accolades and accreditations, one of which is accreditation by the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) which allows Camarena Health to offer diabetes self-management education (DSME) to its patients.

aspire  
to inspire



FRESNO PACIFIC  
UNIVERSITY

CHSU

CALIFORNIA  
HEALTH SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY

UCSF Fresno

# AHEC Scholars Engaged With Our Community

Camarena Health partnered with Central Valley Health Network (CVHN) to provide Madera Unified Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) students the opportunity to participate in the California Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Scholars program. This program recruits, trains, and retains a health professional workforce committed to underserved communities. Five Madera South High School CAN students were selected to be in this first cohort; Perla Reyes, Ruby Tiscareno, Azucena Eugenio-Vasquez, Jenny Alvarez, and Ana Boch.

The AHEC program is a three-part curriculum: an online curriculum hosted by UCSF-Fresno, a clinical training where students could interact and engage with Camarena Health patients in underserved or rural areas to gain hands-on skills, and finally a community-based health project where students could identify a need in underserved communities and help address it. Throughout the program, students engaged in webinars, clinics, and community exploration.

"The AHEC Scholars program gave Madera Unified District students the ability to participate in a unique program in which students are provided the opportunity to connect with their community through a variety of experiences," said Camarena Health Workforce Development Manager Jazmin Rios.

Camarena Health AHEC Scholars engaged with the community by completing their in-house clinical at a variety of locations.

Scholars were stationed at our Camarena Health Urgent Care, Camarena Kids, Almond Women's Health, and 6th Street Health Center locations. This allowed them to experience the diverse care that community health centers provide to patients. For their project, the students chose to collaborate and develop a brochure to address and educate patients on the importance of immunizations and well-child visits.



"The students that participated in this program were eager to learn about their communities needs and how to support them," said Rios. "They participated in our COVID-19 vaccination clinics during their spring break, assisted patients with questions, and assisted with the completion of forms. They were excited to help patients and arrived ready and with a smile."

All five scholars received a \$1,000 scholarship for completing the program. They each plan to begin a college education this fall with intention of entering a healthcare profession. Reyes will be attending Fresno State to major in nursing, Tiscareno will be attending Fresno State to major in biology, Eugenio-Vasquez will be attending Fresno Pacific University to major in nursing, Alvarez will be attending UC Merced to major in chemistry, and Boch will be attending UC Santa Cruz to major in neuroscience.





# Delivering Quality Healthcare Through our

# AgPartners


With over 40% of its patient population  
being agricultural workers,  
Camarena Health and the agricultural  
community are no strangers.

Camarena Health and the agricultural community have deep roots in Madera County, this partnership is as long and rich as their legacies. In 2021, Camarena Health hosted 7 health related events involving more than a dozen different partners in the agricultural community to provide medical services, COVID-19 and flu immunizations, and health education to more than one thousand people outside the four walls of its health centers.

In addition to regularly scheduled events, Camarena Health partnered with Agriland to host other agricultural agencies in the San Joaquin Valley to provide a series of COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Camarena Health providers will often attend these events and provide mini

consultations for people with health concerns that might not require a full visit. Other Camarena Health staff on-site offered diabetes and blood pressure screenings in tandem with health education information about healthy diets and regular exercise.

The ability to mobilize and offer these events close to or at their place of work during the work day allows agricultural workers the access to care and resources they may otherwise not be able to receive.

The background of the page is a photograph of a man from behind, wearing a straw hat, a plaid shirt, and jeans, holding a large cardboard box. In the bottom left corner, there is an inset photograph of a clinic interior. In this inset, a woman wearing a face mask is seated at a desk, and another person is standing behind a counter. On the counter, there are signs for 'Agniland' and 'SpecCrop', along with boxes labeled 'Check-In / Registration'.

Through a partnership with Agriland and local growers, Camarena Health is proud to have helped serve employees of:

- Agriland
- AFC Agri Systems
- Cavalletto Ranches
- Coleman Farming
- Debenedetto Ag
- Double Diamond
- Double H
- Johanson Transportation & Logistics
- Landmark Irrigation
- Midland Tractor
- Ripaul Sorting
- Specialty Crop Co.
- Standard Cattle
- Stanislaus Farm Supply
- & more



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# Protecting Our Community With

# COVID-19

## Vaccine Equity

The COVID-19 vaccine distribution effort is without a doubt a monumental achievement for Camarena Health. Upon learning that a vaccine was now available to help fight the pandemic, the mission was clear: vaccinate as many people as possible.

In the early tiers of vaccine distribution, Camarena Health worked with the City of Madera and neighbors of the A Street Health Center to devise a plan for a drive through clinic in the parking lot. This first clinic opened to major success and saw approximately 150-170 people per day.

As eligibility to receive the vaccine expanded, Madera Unified School District was in touch to set up clinics to help vaccinate teachers and administrators. With some schools anticipating a partial return to the classroom, vaccinating the school district's workforce was paramount.

As vaccine eligibility opened to much of the population, vaccine efforts had to effectively scale with the demand. Multiple drive-up clinics in Chowchilla and walk in clinics in Oakhurst were only the beginning of the next phase. Massive drive-through clinics were set up at Madera South High School operating from morning until night over multiple days helped address the high demand.







Once the initial wave of demand died down, it was time for Camarena Health to begin offering vaccinations in-clinic to patients that maybe were not able to make a drop-in event or perhaps made a later decision to get vaccinated. Eight Camarena Health centers in 4 cities offered readily available vaccines while several other sites could provide the vaccine with prior notice. Outreach efforts did not fall off with demand. A partnership with Agriland allowed for several mobile clinic opportunities to vaccinate not just their own employees, but employees of neighboring agricultural businesses in Madera County.

Through a series of on-site and off-site clinics, Camarena Health was responsible for administering nearly 20,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Nearly 70% of vaccines were administered at off-site clinics in the community with partnerships in Madera, Chowchilla, and Oakhurst. None of this would have been possible if not for the entire workforce at Camarena Health. Not only did individual departments execute their assigned duties, but employees stepped up to help out in other ways even when they weren't asked. Staff from administration to outreach and beyond were at clinics helping direct traffic, collect patient information, and helping wherever else needed.





# Success of Camarena Health *Diabetes* Programs

## Diabetes Support Group

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of secondary health issues such as hypertension and heart disease. Social determinants of health are complex challenges to overcome; however, Camarena Health has provided facilitated support groups to help diabetes patients overcome these challenges. When the pandemic halted all in-person meetings, support group attendees feared that they would lose this vital service for their overall health.

Camarena Health staff responded to the problem of diabetes patients' isolation by creating virtual support groups. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and the groups continue today. Originally intended to be a group to share how they manage life with diabetes, the group quickly became more than that. Many patients showed up for themselves as well as supported one another not just in diabetes management, but also in life-altering personal events. Many of these patients who have experienced hardships continue to show up for the group, be vulnerable with their feelings, and show support to each other during times of isolation or distress.

Through shared experiences, this support group that grew beyond its original call to action demonstrates the values of honesty and respect and demonstrates how excellence and quality health care services can truly make a difference.





## Encouraging healthy choices at Madera South High School

The onset of virtual learning provided more attainable opportunities to engage with patients and the community. When even physical education had to go virtual, it provided an opportunity to discuss topics that may not have been covered as thoroughly (if at all) in a typical PE class. With the help of one of Camarena Health's registered dietitians, videos were developed and presented to Madera South High School students during their online PE classes.

Students watched and learned how to build healthy eating habits that can potentially prevent health complications in the future. They covered topics such as what makes up a healthy diet, portion control, and the effects the human body experiences when these aspects are changed. An unexpected side effect was the number of parents that found themselves watching the video lessons with their children. Parents were learning something new with their high school student or simply being reminded that they themselves could develop healthier eating habits.

The teamwork between Camarena Health and Madera South High School lead to not just students, but their parents receiving a healthy dose of education in the comfort of their home.





## Bridging the Gap of

# Health for the Community

### Camarena Health Mobile Health Unit

Raymond is a small town in the foothills of Madera County about 20 miles from the nearest major city. Due to the distance from major services, including healthcare, individuals and families often travel an hour or more to see a provider and receive medical and dental care. Through a partnership with local residents and leaders such as Madera County Supervisor Tom Wheeler and his Chief of Staff, the Camarena Health Mobile Health Unit began its first “residency” to bring care to the town of Raymond. When news broke that the Mobile Health Unit was coming to town, Camarena Health’s appointments team was overwhelmed with phone calls inquiring about the Mobile Health Unit and its services.

Among these residents was a mother who scheduled an appointment for herself and one of her children at the very first clinic. Previously, planning a trip to a provider was an ordeal for her that involved arranging childcare, accounting for travel expenses, and allocating time. The arrival of the Mobile Health Unit reduced her commute to 5 minutes saving her time and money, and most important, made receiving care more accessible.







## Mariposa Mobile Health Unit



The idea of a Mobile Health Unit is not confined to Madera County. 2021 saw the introduction of a partnership with Mariposa County Unified School District to launch the Mariposa Mobile Health Unit. A school-based version of the mobile health model. Much like the Camarena Health Mobile Unit, the Mariposa Mobile Health Unit features two private exam rooms equipped to provide medical, dental, and behavioral health services. This Unit is primarily based out of Mariposa County High School and is expected to expand service to students and families in towns throughout the county that have little to no access to care in their communities such as El Portal and Lake Don Pedro.

The Mariposa Mobile Health Unit follows a school-based health model where Camarena Health partners closely with the school district, health services staff, and individual school sites to coordinate opportunities for students and their families to access care. The unit also allows for the community and school administration to access care before, during, and after the school day.

Mariposa is a town of about 1,200 people with limited access to a variety of healthcare options. This model of healthcare allows Mariposa County's youngest population to remain healthy, active learners during the school day without the worry of missing school to commute long distances for care.





# Tesoro Viejo

## Wellness Center Groundbreaking

Over the summer, Camarena Health broke ground on its new state-of-the-art Wellness Center at the Tesoro Viejo Town Center. The facility will be located next door to Tesoro Viejo's welcome center. The goal of the Wellness Center is to help the community thrive through meeting the health and wellness needs of nearby residents and their families.

The Camarena Health Wellness Center is a 13,000 square feet, two-story facility that will offer medical, dental, health education, and other services for patients and the community at large. In addition to health services, there will be a gym and flexible spaces for other activities such as group workouts and classes. "We are proud to collaborate with a health industry leader

like Camarena Health as they understand the importance of preventative healthcare and health education," said president of Tesoro Viejo Brent McCaffrey. "This facility is the perfect addition to Tesoro Viejo because it supports health and wellness – a cornerstone of the Tesoro Viejo community."

Camarena Health's health educators will provide customized wellness plans focused on improved health and nutrition, as well as one-on-one counseling sessions, group sessions, and community workshops. The Wellness Center will also extend Camarena Health's reach to many residents in the surrounding Madera County area. The Camarena Health Wellness Center expects to open its doors fall 2022.







## Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino partnership

Chukchansi Gold Resort and Casino saw the importance in providing employees with a health and wellness education program to improve the overall health and safety of their employees. Camarena Health and Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino collaborated to create a health and wellness education plan specifically for their employees by hosting quarterly educational workshops facilitated by the Camarena Health's Outreach and Health Education teams.

Over 300 Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino employees learned about nutrition, staying active, heart awareness, immunization awareness, and more. Employees have been able to translate this

information into a healthier work day by paying attention to what they eat and getting

proper exercise, which has led to a more positive work environment. They have become more aware of their cardiovascular health by ensuring they are regularly screened for heart disease. Additionally, employees are well-informed on the facts and benefits of immunizations for long term health. This partnership is a great example of how the Outreach and Health Education teams continue to find ways to improve the wellness of the community outside the four walls of a Camarena Health location.





The background is a solid orange color. A large, thin yellow circle is positioned on the left side, partially cut off by the edge. Scattered across the orange background are numerous small, solid red dots of varying sizes. The word "Account" is written in a white, cursive, brush-stroke style font, spanning across the middle of the image.

Account



ability





# Letter From the cmo

Battling our way out of the COVID-19 pandemic called for creativity and efficiency throughout all our operational activities.

This resulted in technological innovation becoming a spirited theme for 2021. We fulfilled a diligent review of our healthcare practices to identify areas where we could leverage technology to perform more efficiently and economically. Ultimately, we realized many opportunities for progress, from the delivery of healthcare to the management of our medical waste.

We piloted and expanded upon a project that introduced electronic tablets as a means for gathering medical histories. By having these tablets accessible to patients as they waited in our lobbies or exam rooms, we were able to capitalize on idle time and positively impact the perceived wait times. Additionally, the information gathered was extremely valuable as it expanded our understanding of our patients' medical and mental health histories. Specifically, the history gathered informed us of the patient's current emotional state as well as the presence of any historical trauma. This equipped our medical staff to engage the patient with greater empathy resulting in an improved patient experience.

All our existing radiography equipment was modernized to digital platforms. This upgrade allowed for our imaging to be produced with sharper images, thereby increasing diagnostic accuracy. It also allowed for simple and quick electronic sharing of images between health professionals, and reduced storage and processing costs associated with traditional x-rays.

A new virtual scribe program was launched. This program was realized to help reduce the amount of time medical provider staff spend in front of the computer, instead giving them the face time with patients they desire. The virtual scribes document the patient visit as well as pend lab orders and prescriptions. They have reduced the number of hours medical providers spend each day charting on patients seen and have been influential in helping to address concerns of medical provider burnout.



We transitioned away from the traditional hauling of medical waste to a new technology that gives us greater control for how our medical and dental waste is processed. This new technology involves a small printer-sized device that melts down needles and other biohazardous waste into a small brick that can be thrown in regular landfills. By converting to this innovative system, we have cut down on noxious exhaust fumes and gasoline costs from hauling services, thus reducing our carbon footprint on the planet.

Our vision in this next year is to continue to seek out technological innovations in which to deliver exceptional, modern, and inspiring patient care.

– **Joel Ramirez, MD MBA**  
Chief Medical Officer





# Quality Awards for Quality Healthcare

Camarena Health staff went above and beyond the call of duty in 2021 by continuing to provide quality-based care to patients, and that does not go unrecognized. Camarena Health was awarded two Health Net Awards, an American Health Association – Controlling Blood Pressure recognition, and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) badges for Advancing HIT, Access Enhancer, Health Disparities Reducer, Patient Centered Medical Home, and Health Center Quality Leader.



## Advancing HIT

Met criteria to optimize health information technology services that advance telehealth, patient engagement, interoperability, and collection of social determinants of health to increase access to care and advance quality of care.



## Access Enhancer

Increased the total number of patients served and the number of patients who received at least one comprehensive service (mental health, substance abuse, vision, dental, and/or enabling) by at least 5%.



## Health Disparities Reducer

Served patients in all racial/ethnic groups, and met or exceeded Healthy People (HP) goals in the areas of low birth weight, hypertension, or uncontrolled diabetes for at least one racial/ethnic group, and demonstrated at least a 10% improvement in the areas of low birth weight,

hypertension, or uncontrolled diabetes for at least one racial/ethnic group.



## Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH)

Hold PCMH recognition in one or more delivery sites.



## Health Center Quality Leader

Achieve the best overall clinical quality measure (CQM) performance among all health centers. Camarena Health received bronze for being in the top 21-30 percent.

The HRSA badges specifically outline Camarena Health performing in the highest tiers of various quality metrics-all of which directly show patients how Camarena Health is leading the way in quality care. Awards are not just something for Camarena Health and its staff to be proud of, but they are a reminder to our community that we constantly strive to provide the best care.





## Diabetes Self-Management Education & Support

Maintaining accreditations and certifications is fundamental to Camarena Health providing the highest quality care. Camarena Health receives accreditation from the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) which allows its health educators to offer diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES).



Keeping this program was integral to the health and safety of the community. Most patients in the program are newly diagnosed with diabetes or have difficulty managing at home. By offering the program virtually for nearly two years, Camarena Health has been able to retain AADE accreditation in the pursuit of providing a healthier community.



# Adopting a *Scribe* Program

Many patients may be unaware of what their provider does after they leave the room during a visit. Between patients, providers are charting, ordering prescriptions, and completing other documentation, which can reduce the number of patients they see in a day or make the wait longer for others. Thanks to the use of a medical scribe service called ScribeX, Camarena Health providers have been able to utilize a program which allows them to spend less time on the computer and more time with their patients.

The provider logs in on their laptop each morning and joins a video call with a scribe that will join them for each patient visit. While the

provider gives their undivided attention to the patient, the scribe documents everything that happens. Camarena Health providers using the new scribe program spend several hours less per week charting than they did before. It is helping providers reclaim their time with patients. Not only are patients getting more undivided time with their provider, in some cases they are getting quicker, more efficient visits which leads to less time taken out of their day.

“It allows me to be able to communicate with the patient without having to type and place orders during the visit. It doesn’t interfere with the patient interaction.”

– Nicole Maldonado PA-C,  
Almond Health Center







## Provider

# Retreat

Over the summer, medical leadership hosted the first Camarena Health provider retreat in Monterey. The two-day event offered educational and leisure experiences for Camarena Health providers and their families. The goal of the retreat was to discuss important quality metrics with them in a relaxed environment that fostered discussion amongst the group rather than being lectured to.

Providers were brought up to speed on the latest quality standards federally qualified health centers (FQHC) must meet and why those standards are

important to the care of patients. By educating providers about these standards, Camarena Health can continue to be on the forefront of the growing shift among health centers nationwide to be value-based rather than volume based.

The effectiveness of these trainings are apparent not just in the feedback from patients, but through the awards and recognitions from organizations such as the Health Resources and Services Administration, which gave Camarena Health 5 recognition badges in 2021.

The background is a vibrant blue with abstract geometric shapes, including a large white circle on the left and a white square on the right. A person's arm in a black sleeve is visible on the right side.

Respect





et





# Delivering Good News For Oakhurst Patients


A Camarena Health provider in Oakhurst is putting a positive light on patient health and has found herself more frequently giving the best news possible: “you’re cured.” Sheri Oswald, PA used to work in a gastrointestinal (GI) practice where she was taught how to identify Hepatitis C in blood work; a practice she values as a primary care provider at the Oakhurst Health Center.

Simply by screening her patients for Hepatitis with basic blood work, she noticed Hepatitis positive patients. She would begin to refer them to a GI in Madera, but very quickly realized the difficulties many of her patients had in communities almost an hour away to receive care or medication. Oswald began to consult with local GI doctors and her care teams about the patients. They assured her that she could treat and manage her patients within the health center so patients could eliminate having to commute regularly for treatment.

For many patients in the rural communities of Madera County, having providers who are skilled in identifying and treating diseases that would otherwise go untreated due to lack of access to specialty care is a huge asset. Having a provider who is confident in helping patients to manage and treat Hepatitis C meant that they could now receive care and medication closer to home.







“It is so rewarding. As a provider you don’t always get to deliver good news, but being able to tell a patient they are cured? There is nothing better.”

Sheri Oswald,  
Oakhurst Health Center

Not only that, patients in the mountain community who were previously going to Madera for visits were being advised by other patients and providers to see Oswald at Camarena Health in Oakhurst. While the number of positive cases seemed high, Oswald didn’t think they were disproportional by any means, but were more closely related to the fact that simply more people were open to getting tested knowing there was a provider nearby that could treat and improve their health outcomes.

Treatment used to be specific to each variation of the disease, but advances in modern medicine have led to a treatment plan that covers each one. Through daily medication for eight

weeks, most patients can see a cure once they are tested again after three months. Not only is the treatment simple compared to many other diseases, but it is also more accessible than ever. Especially with providers who are trained and comfortable treating. Oswald shared that she even has patients who receive the treatment by mail which makes it easier for many patients in the mountain community.

Oswald is passionate about providing this care because it is a curable disease, and she is enthusiastic that she is helping contribute to a global effort to eradicate Hepatitis. The World Health Organization plans to eradicate all Hepatitis by 2030. If more healthcare providers have the passion to care and respect the needs of their communities like Oswald, mission accomplished.



# Empathy Training For Staff

Being a patient-centered health center, Camarena Health is always striving to increase quality of care for its patients. Camarena Health has noticed that more and more patients are walking through its doors with challenges that may not be apparent upon first glance. A major initiative was the implementation of an empathy training for the entire workforce: from providers to front office staff, administration to purchasing, and beyond. An empathetic approach to customer service allowed staff to reexamine how they interact with patients, coworkers, and more.

It's not what you say, it's how you say it. By taking a moment to get on their level and understand where they are coming from or realize you may not know where they are coming from, it allows for a more respectful interaction. It is important that patients feel heard when they are in distress or experiencing an issue. Many employees have commented saying "it completely changed my perspective." By creating more self-awareness, staff feel like they are better able to interact with patients.

Camarena Health is confident that the numbers will show a more

positive and satisfied patient population as more of its workforce completes the training. Asking staff to recognize each other when they show empathy is the next step in building an empathetic culture in the workplace. Many employees have also expressed how the lessons carried over into their professional and personal lives, showing that empathy is an essential quality for a thriving environment.





# Improving Access for *Patients* With Chronic Conditions

As essential as attention to one's care is, it can sometimes be a burden to manage, especially if any chronic conditions are present. Camarena Health's new chronic care management initiative puts a chronic care manager in touch with patients with 2 or more chronic conditions to ensure their care continues. This used to be performed by a third party, but in 2021 Camarena Health began the transition to offering chronic care management in-house. Having someone local to the community who understands the diverse population is a major benefit to patients.

The healthcare system is a difficult thing to navigate as it is, but when you factor in challenges individuals and families in the community face such as language barriers, travel, and ever-changing

means of communication, sometimes people begin to feel hopeless. Scheduling appointments, following up on referrals or prescriptions, and following up on visits with a provider are just a few of the things a chronic care manager can help a patient with.

Overall navigation of the healthcare system is a significant benefit to the patient. This help can be invaluable to a patient because in some cases without the help, they may not be taking the appropriate steps to care for their condition.

Ensuring our patients receive the care they need by helping them navigate an ever-changing healthcare landscape is instrumental to keeping the community healthy and safe.



Teamwork







work



# 6th Annual Health Careers Start Here Youth Conference

2021 saw the return of Camarena Health's Health Careers Start Here Youth Conference at the Madera Technical Exploration Center to support Madera Unified School District 8th grade students participating in the health pathway lab. For many years the conference was offered to high school students; this was the first time middle school students had an opportunity to get engaging hands-on experience learning about healthcare professionals. That way, students are better prepared to choose a healthcare pathway during high school.

The conference allowed students to interact with healthcare professionals and presented them with hands-on skills such as suturing, proper wearing of surgical PPE, inhibition workshops, behavioral health modules, and more. Students also had the opportunity to engage with speakers to hear about their profession, challenges they faced, and their journey to becoming a medical professional.

Camarena Health facilitated this annual conference with the help of its A.T. Still University physician assistant students which regularly

includes scholars local to the San Joaquin Valley. "I believe the youth conference is an invaluable experience to help gain exposure and pique interest in different fields of medicine," said Kerman native and physician assistant student Amber Aulakh.

Camarena Health takes pride in inspiring young people to pursue a career in healthcare with hope that they too may come back and help care for the communities in which they grew up.











# Golf Tournament

The return of the Camarena Classic Charity Golf Tournament brought much excitement to the community. 144 golfers convened at the Dragonfly Golf Club to help raise a record \$56,000 supporting community benefit programs Camarena Health provides to patients and community members; programs such as Car Seats for Kids, Reach Out and Read, and the Camarena Health Scholarship Program. Golfers at the tournament regularly praise the Camarena Classic for being one of



**CAMARENA CLASSIC**  
charity golf tournament

their favorite tournaments in which to participate, not just for the experience, but for the generous cause as well.

Camarena Health thanks all players, sponsors, and donors for contributing to the successful turnout of our best Camarena Class yet! It is that generosity which will help Camarena Health pay it forward through programs that serve patients and the community. Camarena Health also extends a big 'thanks' to its board members, volunteers, and staff for their time and dedication to planning and running the event.











# Showing Our Appreciation For Our Staff

If Camarena Health is the heart of healthcare, then the heart of Camarena Health is its staff. After being so resilient in recent years, Camarena Health staff has continued to show up for their patients and community by wearing their heart on their sleeve every day. That dedication must be rewarded, multiple times throughout the year. Here are just a few of the events Camarena Health staff were treated to in 2021.











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