**Bringing the Calm After the Storm**

*OD recounts the devastation and acts of kindness that followed Hurricane Michael*

Living in Mariana, Florida, Stan Peacock, OD, and the staff at his practice inside Walmart are prepared for hurricanes. However, as they prepped for Hurricane Michael in October of 2018, they didn't know what to think. What originally was predicted to be a category 2 or 3 hurricane turned quickly into a category 5—a rare and wildly destructive force of nature. Dr. Peacock and Sean Despin, the Vision Center manager, got word to shut down the day before the hurricane and went into action.

Inside the practice, they made a day of trying to protect and cover the equipment and seeing last-minute patients. One of those was an elderly man who lived in a mobile home in the area. While Despin and Dr. Peacock were telling him of their own evacuation plans, the man revealed that he had no intention of going anywhere.

Persuading him as much as they were able to go stay with his sister downstate, they believed themselves unsuccessful when he left. Several weeks after the hurricane passed through, the man came in to thank them both for their advice. He did heed it, and when he returned, he found his home was completely demolished. His home was not the only site of wreckage—across the city there was so much loss and devastation, including in the practice. With Walmart’s help, Dr. Peacock made a bold choice: he made a two-week reservation in hotels in both Dothan and Mariana, and whichever town was hit the least hard would be where he set up camp to get back to work.

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**Education Continues Beyond Graduation**

*Young OD finds that her confidence rises with the responsibilities inside a Walmart store*

As a 2018 graduate of New England College of Optometry in Boston, Massachusetts, Merna Khilla, OD, or “Dr. Merna” as she is called by her patients, has found her place in a Walmart space. While she had heard the “negative stigma about going into a corporate setting,” she says that being a part of her school’s American Optometric Student Association, she was exposed to Walmart representatives and different practice models.

“’There was a disconnect between the stigma and what we were hearing,’” she says. “Once she opened her ears to hearing more about working in affiliated settings, more doors began to open for Dr. Khilla. The Walmart representative she built a relationship with got her in contact with her current employer, which has given her the opportunity to practice in her own style. “I’m a firm believer that it’s not where you practice, it’s how you practice.”

For Dr. Khilla, that is measured by the impact she’s been able to have. “There’s a lot more freedom than what many optometrists would expect, and we get to help people who otherwise might not be able to get care or might not have the money to go to other offices.”

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By Naheed Ahmad, OD, Roswell, Georgia

Driving home 19 years ago from my work at a wonderful private practice in the Atlanta area, I saw a sign for a Walmart Supercenter coming soon. Although my colleagues and the working experience at the private practice were wonderful, I wasn’t happy—personally or professionally. It was a difficult time in my life as I was a newly single mom to two daughters, and I needed more freedom and find a better way to work. I contacted the Walmart district manager and discussed the lease opening, but I didn’t tell him I was looking for a break. I expected to practice at Walmart for maybe a year or two to get myself on solid ground again, but today, 19 years later, I cannot imagine practicing anywhere else.

Shattering stereotypes from the start
I asked the typical questions, reflecting how much I had been influenced by what I thought practicing optometry inside a retail venue would be: How many patients am I expected to see? What are my hours? How much do I charge patients? The district manager said, “You signed the lease for five days a week; you decide the hours, the patients you’ll provide for building a very successful, full-scope practice within the walls of a Walmart store. Here are some of the strategies I used to build the practice.

Be assertive: Signing a lease means you’re opening a business. Make the decisions that are best for the patients and the practice. I chose to be medically oriented, seeing patients for refractive and medical eye care services. I see patients for foreign body removal and red eyes, and I co-manage glaucoma patients.

Welcome walk-ins: Although my practice today is much busier than it was when first starting out, expect and welcome walk-ins. Even on my busiest days, I’ll try to accommodate the urgent walk-in patient. My staff may also suggest that the patient who wants new eyewear can go make that selection now, which will speed up the process in a few days when we finish the exam.

Get to know the patients: At the start, when I was less busy, I would wander around the Vision Center and the store, willing to answer questions from customers and Walmart associates. It’s a great way to build a patient base and raise awareness.

Be accessible: As with getting to know people in the store, identify the businesses in the area that might appreciate knowing you’re there. For example, my practice happens to be within range of a large number of car dealerships with service departments, and I’ve introduced myself to all the managers. If a mechanic gets a foreign body in the eye, the manager knows to call me, and we will get that patient onto the schedule quickly.

Put patients first: I appreciate that I’m not selling products and can focus on the patients’ needs. I’m never worried about the inventory on-hand or materials I have in order to meet a quota; my recommendations are solely determined by what is best for the patient.

Be a contact lens specialist: The percentage of patients in my practice who wear contact lenses is high because I am seen as an expert. I fit patients with keratoconus with scleral lens and specialty lenses, and patients know that I’m willing to work with them to ensure a great fit. I don’t categorize patients as contact lens or eyeglasses patients; there’s no reason they cannot be both. Building a contact lens practice, with the accompanying higher professional fees, is also a great way to build the practice.

Don’t prejudge patients’ ability or willingness to pay: I see patients who don’t have medical or vision insurance and are drawn to my practice because of the value I provide to my patients. Many of my patients also come to me because they see me as their trusted neighborhood OD. I’m not charging the lowest exam fee, but I’m reasonable, convenient and visible.

Dr. Ahmad is also the immediate past president of the American Association of Corporate Optometrists.

Dr. Ahmad Honored

Dr. Millicent Knight presented Dr. Naheed Ahmad with the Leadership Award at the Women In Optometry Theia Awards

Women In Optometry Theia Awards

Millicent Knight, OD, FAAO, FAARM, a previous winner of the Theia Leadership Award, presented the 2019 Theia award for leadership to Naheed Ahmad, OD, of Roswell, Georgia, and immediate past president of the American Association of Corporate Optometrists. In accepting her award, Dr. Ahmad said, “We don’t do it for the recognition, but we do it because it’s the right thing to do.” *
Practice Setting Allows OD to Keep Her Commitment to Her Patients and Her Country

After Melanie Zhang, OD, finished her two-year commitment as a Captain in the U.S. Air Force, she began working in private practice. During her active-duty career, she spoke with other military ODs who were working at independent practices inside Walmart, and they liked it. So after the birth of her second child, she began looking for a way to open a practice of her own.

As luck would have it, a Walmart recruiter contacted her—and based on the timing and the positive feedback she received from her colleagues, she pursued the opportunity to start her independent practice, Open Vision, in a Walmart store in Fremont, California. As it was a nearly new location, “From my perspective, I opened cold,” which meant that she was able to create the practice the way she wanted. Dr. Zhang wasn’t sure how quickly it would grow, but she was prepared for starting a new business to take some time. “I came in and I wasn’t expecting to see many patients; one to two a day was my expectation,” she said. “From that point on, it felt like it was just organic growth.”

Dr. Zhang understands why owning your own practice has such appeal to former military personnel. She is currently a major in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, which carries a considerable commitment, and an independent practice made it easier to take the time. Earlier this year, she served two months at a hospital in Japan, taking care of service men and women and their families.

When duty calls
At every level, from store to the business management team, Walmart accommodated her leave agreement obligations in support of her reserve duty. “With the military, you never know when you’re going to be called. So you do what you’re called to do. Walmart was a great business partner, and I felt like I could help out as an airman and still take care of my patients.”

Walmart has a reputation for supporting military members, which is certainly attractive to ODs who remain on reserve duty. Spending that amount of time away from her practice did not come without some worry. “I was concerned about leaving the practice for that long. It turned out to be a positive experience and interaction with Walmart. It’s hard to be pulled from work for two months, and I didn’t want to shut the door and walk away, and but Walmart worked with me to find an arrangement that was good for both businesses,” she says, noting Walmart worked with her as she found coverage for her time away so patients could still be seen.

She was able to be in contact with her practice via e-mail to track what was happening in the clinic. “I don’t feel like my practice suffered,” she says. Patients were seen by covering doctors, and they were happy to see her return.

Adjusting to differences
Certainly, military and civilian practices have their differences. “In the military, I was in a hospital, seeing 14 to 18 patients per day. My work there was to make sure our pilots were meeting the vision standards set by the Air Force,” she says.

To move into the private sector, Dr. Zhang brushed up on topics like insurance billing, patient economics and business finance. She also encourages patients to purchase lenses with the features and benefits that will help them most. Dr. Zhang notes the convenient Walmart Vision Center is among the options patients can select to fill their eyewear.

Marketing touchpoints
As any OD who cold starts a practice knows, marketing is vital. Dr. Zhang’s website makes it easy for patients to schedule appointments from their computers or their phones, if they want to. Her social media marketing—a Google page, Facebook and others—is important to her Silicon Valley patients where an active presence on the internet can make or break a practice. “One person walked in and said ‘I [searched] for optometrists and you were one of the top 10,’” she says a patient told her recently. The website can be viewed in English or Chinese; Dr. Zhang is fluent in Mandarin. She is currently working on her Spanish, too.

It’s exciting to be in this situation where she can build her independent practice as a business partner with Walmart and cultivate relationships with new and returning patients, she says.

Currently a major in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, Dr. Zhang says she appreciates the flexibility and support she gets from the Walmart team.
An Early Change in Heart Has Led to Fulfilling Career

As a recent appointee to the board of the American Association of Corporate Optometrists (AACO), Melonie Clemmons, OD, of Elijay Eye Care and Wellness Center in Ellijay, Georgia, looks forward to the future and how she and her fellow board members can impact.

Practicing at an independent practice location inside a Walmart, Dr. Clemmons knows the benefits of working with a corporate affiliation. “Doctors can build their own private practice inside their Walmart location if they invest the time and are committed,” she says. She approached her practice as a long-term investment in which she would reap the rewards of putting in the hard work.

Network
She also sees the impact of being part of the AACO. “Building relationships with colleagues and discussing how they do things in their practice has been one of my biggest blessings. As an AACO member, I am surrounded by other optometrists with the same type of practice and goals. I’ve learned as much outside the classroom as I have inside the classroom through conversations I have had in between classes at AACO conferences,” she says.

Plans change
As a student at Southern College of Optometry, Dr. Clemmons had imagined she would probably head into a private practice setting, but she landed in a corporate-affiliated practice, where she was able to focus on patient care and contact lens fittings. “I was surprised the practice was so advanced and that it had retinal cameras. This was 23 years ago, and most practices didn’t have this type of advanced instrumentation.”

When she first opened her first practice inside Walmart, she began connecting with other independent optometrists who had practices inside Walmart to learn tips and strategies to establish and grow her practice. She differentiated her practice by adding medical services and advanced instrumentation, and she grew her business to two offices.

“I want to make a difference.”

Looking forward
The AACO, which supports corporate optometrists and their practices, “gives its members the tools they need to be successful medically and finanically,” says Dr. Clemmons. “The AACO encourages corporate doctors to practice full–scope optometry and to embrace the medical model. This enables us to offer better care to our patients. For example, I decided to lease an Optos ultra-wide angle retinal imaging system. It’s such a wow factor for my patients and has enabled me to do more disease management.

The AACO also supports their members by listening to concerns and facilitating communication with their corporate partners when appropriate,” she says. “The AACO truly understands the needs of corporate optometrists like no other industry organization.”

Dr. Clemmons is also vocal about her desire to help continue the great work of past board members. “I want to serve in areas that are needed, and I hope I will have the opportunity to assist in growing our relationship with the American Optometric Association and the individual state associations. I also want to be approachable and open to new ideas or concerns from our members. I want to make a difference.”

Enjoying the journey
Walmart has also been helpful in supporting her career development. “Walmart leadership is open to communication. The more open the communication between the doctors and their corporate partner, usually the more successful everyone will be.”

For example, some years ago, as her patient base was growing rapidly, she asked for another exam lane; Walmart complied. When she asked to paint her space to match her brand, Walmart supported her, allowing her to liven up her practice space using approved colors. She’s preparing now to update the look and her branding again.

To independent practitioners starting out inside a Walmart location, Dr. Clemmons passes on advice that was given to her: “Don’t give up. Be persistent and work hard. Don’t be afraid to communicate with Walmart management. Share your needs and concerns so they can be addressed. Be respectfully vocal as well as considerate to their concerns,” she says.

On a more personal note, she advises, “Make sure you have a work/life balance so you don’t get burned out. Enjoy the journey.”

If you haven’t taken a look at a Walmart Vision, 2020 is the year to do so.
AACO Recognitions

The American Association of Corporate Optometrists (AACO) held its national meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, in October. Independent optometrists who work inside Walmart locations were honored with several awards.

The AACO Member of the Year award went to Larry Brown, OD, of Cartersville, Georgia. In addition to being an early adapter of leading-edge technology in his practice, Dr. Brown serves as vice president of the Georgia Board of Optometry and is active as Georgia’s representative to ARBO.

The AACO Young Professional award went to Amanda M. Lee, OD, who is the director, quality assurance, at Walmart U.S. Health and Wellness. Dr. Lee joined Walmart U.S. in January 2019, bringing more than 18 years of experience in the optical industry. In 2000, Dr. Lee began her optical career working as an optician for National Vision located inside Walmart in Minot, North Dakota. She earned her optometry degree from Pacific University, Forest Grove, Oregon, in 2007. Before becoming the Optometric Clinical Director for Walmart U.S. in January 2019—a role in which she served briefly before taking on her current role—she has practiced as an independent doctor in locations in three different Walmart stores in North Dakota. Thus far in her career, Dr. Lee has been recognized as the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association Student of the Year, Doctor of the Quarter for Walmart District 376 twice and Doctor of the Year for Walmart District 376. The AACO Special Service Award was presented to George T. Banyas, OD, of Gibsonia, Pennsylvania. Dr. Banyas has more than 33 years of experience, and his practice provides family and senior eye care, pre/post-operative management, anterior segment care, cosmetic, and therapeutic contact lens care. Dr. Banyas was recognized for his contributions to AACO, including serving on the ElectriEye Journal editorial board and as abstracts editor. He is also a reviewer for continuing education courses for Council of Optometric Practitioners (COPE).

The AACO also presented its highest award, the Larry J. Alexander Award, to Millicent Knight, OD, FAAO, FAARM, who is senior vice president, customer development group, Essilor of America.*

Education Continues Beyond Graduation

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In terms of delivery of patient care, Dr. Khilla has found little difference, if any, in the experience of a private practice. “The way I practice here is no different than at a private practice: two exam lanes, comprehensive exams, testing and extending into dry eye care services.” With the ability to practice eye care solely, Dr. Khilla says that patients appreciate that her recommendations are based on what she feels is best, not what will help her profitability. “I get to make my recommendations freely because I have nothing to do with the optical floor. We are professional service providers, not salespeople or product providers.”

“The best doctors we can be”

Many new ODs struggle with minimal education in the business and marketing aspect, but Dr. Khilla recommends eagerly taking on the challenge. “In school, our goal is to be the best doctors we can be, not the best businesspeople,” she says. Her one business course, in her third year, was overshadowed by studying for boards. “There really is no ‘good time,’ and while that’s something optometry schools are looking into to help their students, it’s to your advantage to learn business.” When it comes to the practices of Doctors Eye Clinics where Dr. Khilla works, social media has been less prioritized than more personal methods of contact, such as postcards. A website is currently being designed, but the practice has a solid patient base, thanks in large part to the reputation and foot traffic in the Walmart store itself.

A crash course in confidence

“I was kind of thrown in, and it was the best thing for me,” says Dr. Khilla. “Of all the classes we take in optometry school, the one we don’t take is confidence. Becoming confident on your own and learning to communicate with your patients is a steep learning curve. Students might not realize they struggle until they’re alone. Being thrown in is what I needed because it forced me to become confident.”

For soon-to-be grads or anyone early in practice, Dr. Khilla advises them to “take any opportunity that presents itself. The ones that push you outside of your comfort zone are the ones that will make you a better doctor.” She learned that even while she was in school, where she specifically requested pediatric rotations—an area where she felt least comfortable. “We’re young. It’s the time to take risks.”

If Dr. Khilla could go back in time, she would tell herself not to stress over practice modality. “Just because you choose a different route from your peers doesn’t mean that it’s bad; it’s just different! If you’re proud of the work you’ve done, nothing else matters.”*
Bringing the Calm After the Storm

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The aftermath

The staff wasn't allowed to go into the Mariana practice while Walmart checked the soundness of the structure, but two days later, clad in hard hats, they were able to see the damage themselves. The roof of the pharmacy had been ripped off. When standing in the patient work-up room, the group looked up to see sky. Walmart wasted no time jumping in to help. "Walmart was amazing," says Dr. Peacock. "The company started preparing ahead of time, shipping in water and all the necessities of life. Walmart brought in a mobile pharmacy and parked it in front of the Mariana store. People lined up to get their medications and the ready-to-eat meals brought in by FEMA." When Dr. Peacock began seeing patients at a location in Chipley, Florida—the only eye care facility open in five counties—he says, patients streamed in with eye injuries or foreign bodies that had gotten in from flying debris in the storm and to replace lost or damaged eyeglasses. "We got to a point very quickly where we didn't go in and say, 'Did you have any damage?' Instead we asked, 'What kind of damage did you get?' We became someone to talk to. People would sit in the exam chair and cry."

It wasn't just the patients who came in with their loss and grief; multiple members of Dr. Peacock's staff had lost their homes, and even more were displaced and staying with others while the destruction was assessed. All the team members could relate to the patients because they were feeling it themselves. Without missing a beat, Walmart brought in generators and was able to get the temporary practice up and running within days.

Getting by with a little help from their friends

Dr. Peacock says he was so impressed by the acts of kindness that followed so much pain. For example, one of the store's opticians, Tyler McCoy, had planned his wedding for the following weekend. The couple had stored everything they saved and purchased for the wedding in their home and their shed, both of which had been affected by the storm, ruining their wedding belongings and décor. The wedding was supposed to be outside, in an area that was now devastated. That's when a fellow team-member and optician Ashley Johns stepped in. Her mother owned a wedding venue in Chipley—which happened to be one of the first towns to get power back after the storm. Two weddings had been planned at that venue for the same weekend, but both had been canceled after the storm. She had food, generators and availability. Dr. Peacock and the team helped raise the money so the couple could move forward. "We had us a wedding! It was the most amazing thing," he says. "There was so much destruction and despair, but we all got together. I paid my technicians to be the servers. Sean did the music. It was wonderful. We had this one thing that was good come out of it that, and everyone felt great about. It gave all of us hope."

"You get up and grit your teeth"

During and immediately following the hurricane, there was an abundance of media coverage of Mariana. The news crews left quickly after, even while the residents know that the recovery process will take years. The heavily forested area requires tremendous clean up that comes with a heavy price: about $2,000 per acre of forest. "Economically, people are still hurting. But it's a strong community. The people are strong; you get up and grit your teeth and start working again the next day."
For the Le Sisters, Optometry Is the Family Business

For My Le, OD, and Yen Le, OD, FAAO, their inspiration to go into optometry was influenced by their parents and sisters being physicians. The family's shared vision is to make a positive difference in the lives of their patients each and every day.

Dr. Yen Le of Happy Family Eye Care in Mayodan, North Carolina, graduated from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (now Salus University) in 2010. After graduation, she completed a residency in primary care and ocular disease in 2011 at The Eye Institute at Salus University before earning her fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry. After working in Pennsylvania, Dr. Yen Le was determined that she wanted to practice in her home sweet home state of North Carolina. After contacting Walmart about renting space, Dr. Yen Le received a call from Renee Hinshaw, a market health and wellness director for Walmart in North Carolina, offering her the opportunity to open her own practice and practice full-scope medical optometry.

Dr. My Le graduated optometry school from Salus University in 2013. She is currently practicing in Greensboro at Happy Eye Care Center inside a Walmart. Dr. My Le says she feels like she is a part of the Walmart family. Both of the sisters say that they believe that the key to working in Walmart is to make a big impact in the community. They seek to provide patients with enriching educational and clinical experiences and provide top-quality care—both medical and refractive—in an accessible environment. At each practice, patients can be treated beyond routine eye exams including eye emergencies; foreign body removals; comprehensive eye exams with a heavy focus on diabetes, hypertension, macular degeneration, dry eyes and allergic conjunctivitis; pediatric and binocular vision exams; post-operative care; and specialty contact lens fittings. Both of the Le sisters let their patients know that they can count on them. While the sisters practice about an hour apart from each other in North Carolina, Dr. My Le notes that neither of them sees the other as competition but rather as collaborators.

Independent but connected

While the sisters have some of the same training and certainly the same upbringing, their involvement in the other's practice is limited to some light consultations.

According to Dr. Yen Le, “We were trained at the same school, so we are both very confident in what we do. We are very independent. If we have questions, we will ask. We are just a phone call away.”

Positive, dedicated leaders

Hinshaw speaks highly of both doctors, acknowledging their commitment to their patients and their willingness to do everything they can to be available for their patients. She calls them both “positive, dedicated leaders, well-known in their stores and communities” and commends their hearts for their patients.

Their top priority is to convey a happy, family environment that they want to pass on to every patient who comes through their respective doors. “It’s important to treat patients like family. We want our patients to feel welcome to our practice like it’s their second home,” says Dr. Yen Le. “Family is caring. The environment is more home-like, and patients feel more comfortable. Everyone who walks in here should be treated like family,” says Dr. My Le.

Indeed, the practices’ Yelp reviews rave about how friendly and efficient the staff is, how the doctors explain what’s happening and how patients, as one put it, “are treated like royalty.”

Both doctors say that they appreciate how Walmart has enabled them to practice independently, just as they appreciate how their family influence has helped—and continues to help them—in their successful businesses.

“Visitors had a chance to experience the technology and see the frames.”
Make It Easy for Patients to Say Yes to Contact Lenses

OD presents the benefits and the value of daily disposable multifocal contact lenses

Colorado is known for its inhospitable environment due to its high altitude and dry air. Combine that with the sometimes exacerbated dryness that older contact lens wearers can experience, and it can be frustrating for these patients to wear contact lenses successfully.

Mark D. Jackson, OD, who has an independent practice inside a Walmart store in Ft. Collins, Colorado, had experienced some of those frustrations himself. However, when he tried wearing DAILIES TOTAL1® Multifocal contact lenses, his reaction was positive.

“It’s a comfortable lens, and for me, I had an outstanding experience,” he says. “Now I encourage patients to try these lenses for a few days. Patients often tell me that they cannot feel the contact lenses on their eyes,” he says. Alcon survey data has found that 9 out of 10 of wearers agree they’re so comfortable, they sometimes forget they’re wearing them.

More options, more candidates

As contact lenses are introduced to the market and companies provide more options in designs and materials, Dr. Jackson says that it means that he can offer contact lenses as a full-time or part-time option to more people. Here are some of the strategies that he has been using—not only to encourage contact lenses in general but also to move presbyopic patients into the multifocal lenses that he believes will give them a positive experience.

It’s not one or the other.

Avoid asking patients if they’re interested in contact lenses or eyeglasses, as patients may be open to the idea of both. “If the patients’ eyes are healthy and the prescription is within the range of available parameters, I will ask patients if they have considered contact lenses for part-time or full-time wear. If the patient has worn contact lenses before, I ask why the patient stopped. That can open the door to a discussion on different designs and materials that have come out since that time.”

Encourage daily disposable contact lenses.

“Daily disposable lenses are a healthy and convenient way to wear contact lenses,” Dr. Jackson says. Patients seem to understand the benefits, especially the comfort, of using a fresh pair of contact lenses every day, he says. A study on symptomatic contact lens wearers with contact lens discomfort in their habitual contact lenses who were fit in DAILIES TOTAL1® Multifocal contact lenses rated these lenses highly and experienced additional comfortable wear time, after trying them for two weeks.

Don’t prejudge what the patient will buy.

While this is a common refrain among practice management experts, it can be difficult for doctors to embrace. “It took my own experience with the DAILIES TOTAL1® Multifocal contact lenses to realize that I need to offer my patients the opportunity to try this lens and let them decide if their experience is as good as mine,” he says.

Let the patients try the lenses.

For patients who have dropped out of contact lens wear or have not worn contact lenses ever or for years, there is no substitute for trying the lenses on in the office. “It’s difficult to explain the advantage of binocular vision at all distances to patients who have accommodated their advancing presbyopia. I will offer to put a pair of these contact lenses on the patient’s eye and then let the patient decide,” he says. In other words, make it easy for the patient to try contact lenses.

Follow the fitting guide.

After having fit multifocal contact lenses for some years, Dr. Jackson confesses to thinking he knew what to do. “When I went to the Alcon Experience Center for training and learned about the design of the multifocal lenses, I began to understand that there are elements to the fitting that are unique. My success rate was higher as soon as I began using the fitting guide to select the first lens,” he says. Achieving that first-fit success, or at least minimizing the number of changes needed, is convenient for the patient and saves the doctor chair time.

Emphasize the importance of an annual comprehensive exam.

Dr. Jackson encourages patients to return to his office for an annual exam, noting that simply reordering contact lenses before the prescription expires is not the only reason for coming in. “I explain what data I gather at each exam and why I measure the intraocular pressure and examine the health of the ocular surface. I want to establish that it’s not simply updating the prescription.”

Hearing this message helps reinforce that contact lens wear comes with responsibilities and is similar to other health care wellness visits. It also allows him to revisit with patients who did not choose contact lenses or an upgrade to their current lenses this year to consider it the following year. “It’s important to plant the seed about contact lenses as an option with every patient,” he says.

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