



# Medical Coding an Essential Step in Comprehensive Care

*O.D. finds quality, thoroughness of care increases*

**R**ichard Solomon, O.D., who holds two LensCrafters leases in the Maryland suburbs near Washington, D.C., began delving into medical coding and billing in January 2007. "I had always wanted to create a more comprehensive practice overall. That means being the patients' primary care provider and referring only those patients who needed subspecialty care," he says.



**Dr. Solomon**

The benefits of embracing the medical model of optometry, he thought, would be a more loyal patient base. "The more often you see a patient, the more likely he or she is to take advantage of your refractive vision services," he says. Indeed, that's just what has happened. "When patients come in for ocular allergies or infections, they often buy additional contact lenses," he says.

As a result, his revenues and patient base have increased with no downturn in the core refractive eye care services, he says. "Every patient who comes in the door represents potential referrals. The practice is listed as a participating provider, so it follows that patients who come to us for a medical condition add significantly to our referral base."

Dr. Solomon, his six associates and his staff members all make a point of telling patients the variety of refractive and medical services they provide. The staff also makes sure that they collect the patients' med-

ical and vision insurance information and that all patients understand that medical and vision insurance are separate policies. "We educate every single patient, every single day, that vision insurance is for the eye exam and glasses or contact lenses and that the medical insurance may cover allergies, irritations and eye emergencies."

It's critically important for Dr. Solomon to know what medical and vision insurance the patient has before starting the exam, he says. For routine vision exam patients with a medical plan, Dr. Solomon explains that as a participating provider, he can work with them on any medical eye care need in the future. Most patients don't know that, he says. But as a result of his explanations to all

*Continued on page 2*

## ALLDocs Meeting to Focus on a Healthy Practice

*Registration forms are online*

**T**he ALLDocs meeting will be held from Sunday, October 19, to Thursday, October 23, at The Breakers in Palm Beach, FL. The first 65 O.D.s to sign up will be entered in a contest to win a 37" LCD television.

The deadline for guaranteed rooms at The Breakers is August 14. Register by calling The Breakers at 1.888.273.2537 and reference the ALLDocs/LensCrafters group when making your reservations.

Also register for the meeting with ALLDocs directly by downloading the registration form on [alldocsod.com](http://alldocsod.com) and mailing it to Dr. Richard Hults.

Need help with travel? Call Kim Collings at 800.218.9097 or email her at [kimcollings@cinci.rr.com](mailto:kimcollings@cinci.rr.com). ■



## Coding

Continued from page 1

patients, "I am seeing our existing patients for more visits. We remain their source for refractive needs, but now we are also their source for complaints due to allergy, dry eye or infections."

To ensure proper billing, Dr. Solomon emphasizes that it must be the O.D. who records the patient's chief complaint. Insurers require that the chief complaint match the billing codes. Having patients or staff answer that question could lead to rejection of the bill. To keep that from happening in his office, "the chief complaint is only on the exam form, not the comprehen-

## See Your Doctor Yearly

**T**he more Dr. Richard Solomon treats medical conditions, the more often he sees his patients. At a minimum, he tells them he wants to see them once a year for their annual eye health exam. He gains support to this message with each box of OPTI-FREE® RepleniSH® MPDS he and his staff hand to contact lens patients. The box carries a banner that says, "See Your Doctor Yearly For Healthy Vision."

"OPTI-FREE RepleniSH is my #1 MPDS," he says. He cites the high level of effectiveness, sustained comfort and biocompatibility with silicone hydrogel lenses as reasons.

Dr. Solomon also relies on other Alcon therapeutics as his medical practice grows. PATADAY™ Ophthalmic Solution has become his top choice for allergy sufferers, and he regularly recommends SYSTANE® Lubricant Eye Drops for dry eye patients. ■



sive history form, so it's only available to the doctor. That way, the chief complaint, review, exam history, assessment and plan will all be consistent," Dr. Solomon says. ■

## Spotlight on Dr. Hults' Success

**R**ichard E. Hults, O.D., M.B.A., J.D., and ALLDocs annual meeting planner, is featured on the cover of the 2Q 2008 issue of *Contact Lens Profit Advisor*, the quarterly publication of ABB CONCISE. The article reports that about 40 percent of Dr. Hults' contact lens sales go through youlens.com, a patient contact lens reordering service linked to his web site.

Dr. Hults encourages O.D.s to use youlens.com for their patients. O.D.s who don't have that functionality on their web sites are losing business, he says. "You don't have to reinvent the wheel. All you have to do is say yes to a company like ABB CONCISE, and it can boost your practice immediately. You can recapture that business from patients who shop the Internet," he says. ■



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

### Here's to Your Health

**W**hat is a healthy practice? More importantly, how do you achieve one? That's the focus of our annual meeting to be held this October at The Breakers in Palm



Dr. Gelb

Beach, FL. We'll be looking at all the aspects of a healthy practice—its financial health, its competitiveness and effectiveness and the way it can improve the health of the patients it serves.

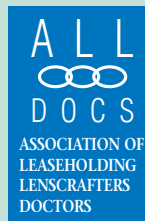
To help us achieve that, your ALLDocs board and our meeting sponsors have created an agenda that will focus on practical tips to implement on your return to your practice. There will be time in the agenda to share discussions with colleagues and time to talk with vendors.

We believe this will be the most informative and interesting meeting we've held. We encourage you to come—and we encourage you to spread the word to other ALLDocs members who have not been to one of our meetings.

I ask that you register today because that helps our meeting organizers and vendors plan accordingly. Registration information is available on [alldocsod.com](http://alldocsod.com).

We hope to see you in Palm Beach. ■

Kerry Gelb, O.D.  
[drkmg@comcast.net](mailto:drkmg@comcast.net)



## GUEST COLUMN FROM COOPERVISION

# There's a New Lens in Town: Avaira™ Arrives

By Tom Nicholson

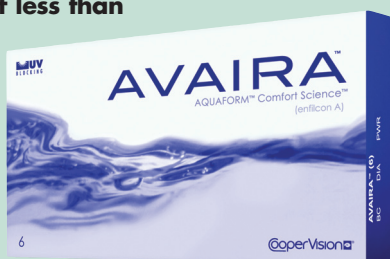
CooperVision launched its newest lens, Avaira™, in June. We believe it's the best daily-wear, two-week replacement lens available. There are many clinical benefits of the lens. It has a high water content of greater than 45 percent, which provides hydrogel-like comfort, and it has a low modulus of less than 0.50 MPa, which results in fewer mechanical or physiological complications such as superior epithelial arcuate lesions and contact lens-induced papillary conjunctivitis.

AQUAFORM™, CooperVision's patented material technology, surrounds the siloxane chains giving the material hydrophilic properties. AQUAFORM creates charged areas within the material that form hydrogen bonds with the water molecules, locking the water into the lens material.

With this naturally wettable material, Avaira retains water, minimizing dehydration and increasing

comfort and deposit resistance. In addition, the highly wettable material aids resistance to lipid and protein deposits.

The aspheric front-surface optics result in sharper, crisper visual acuity, and the UV blocker in the lens aids protection in outdoor environments.



The Avaira lens can be positioned so it complements the CooperVision premium material product portfolio. For example, the Biomedics® XC lens is positioned as an entry-level, two-week aspheric lens made with PC Technology™. The 100-Dk Avaira is a premium two-week aspheric silicone hydrogel lens that is naturally wettable. And the Biofinity™ is the premium monthly aspheric silicone hydrogel lens with naturally wettable characteristics.

In this initial launch, Avaira is available in minus powers to -6.00D. Higher minus and plus powers will follow later this year or early next. ■



Tom Nicholson

## A Healthy Practice

### ALLDocs meeting agenda

Here is a tentative agenda for the annual meeting. This agenda is subject to change, and updates will be posted on [alldocsod.com](http://alldocsod.com).



The Breakers' Ocean Golf Course

the Healthy Body by **Steven Newman, O.D.**, and two hours on ARMD and diabetic retinopathy by **Jerry Sherman, O.D.**

◆ Focus groups

#### Tuesday, October 21st

- ◆ Vendor presentations
- ◆ Internet Contact Lens Business—Get Started
- ◆ Bulletproof Your Contact Lens Business, a practice management session presented by ALLDocs member **Jack McIntyre, O.D.**
- ◆ EMR presentation mod-

#### Sunday, October 19th

- ◆ Lunch for golfers followed by golf at The Breakers
- ◆ Welcome reception

#### Monday, October 20th

- ◆ Welcome and presentations by Gold Sponsors, Alcon and CooperVision.
- ◆ CE sessions, including two hours on



Dr. McIntyre

erated by **Michael Sherman**

◆ Vendor Fair

#### Wednesday, October 22nd

- ◆ Vendor presentations
- ◆ CE sessions, including three hours of a health update

by **Gabe Mirkin, M.D.**

- ◆ Medical Billing, a practice management session presented by the Corcoran Group and sponsored by Alcon
- ◆ Vendor Fair



Dr. Gerber

#### Thursday, October 23rd

- ◆ Business meeting
- ◆ Practice management session presented by **Gary Gerber, O.D.**
- ◆ LensCrafters presentation ■

## IMPLEMENTING THE MEDICAL MODEL

### Make First Impressions Count

By John Rumpakis, O.D., M.B.A.

**O**ptometry provides nearly three-quarters of all first-time eye care encounters. In any other industry, having a near 75-percent market share would be phenomenal. Recognize how powerful this statistic is.

#### The First Impression Opportunity

As the old saying goes, "You never have a second chance to make a first impression." So maximize the opportunity of the first impression you make with the patients you see every day. It has been stated that 78 percent of the U.S. population doesn't know the difference between an ophthalmologist, optometrist or optician.

Yet, these same people would probably define optometrists as those who prescribe glasses or contact lenses. People don't know what they don't know! You, and only you, have the ability to provide them with the knowledge of what services you can provide.

#### The Medical Opportunity

Ocular allergy and dry eye affect somewhere between 25 percent and 40 percent of the popula-

tion. These are easy conditions to diagnose and easy conditions to treat. It's also possible to schedule these visits without eating into your existing schedule. Because the irritations of ocular allergies and dry eye are so commonplace, there are many opportunities to educate your patient population about your ability to treat these conditions.

Don't let this opportunity get away from you. The very people you see each and every day suffer from these conditions and may not mention them to you because they may not be aware that you have the expertise to do anything about them.

This is your opportunity to provide the standard of care for conditions you should be diagnosing and treating. This is your opportunity to change their minds. This is your opportunity to change their appreciation of your expertise. This is your opportunity to educate them about how you can provide a solution to conditions that they have self-treated with little success. This is your opportunity to make a first impression that lasts. ■



Dr. Rumpakis

## Ten Ways to Succeed

**J**udi Schaffer, O.D., Ft. Lauderdale, FL, has been a successful LensCrafters leaseholder for more than 12 years. She has created this list of 10 tips that have aided her.

**1. Take Charge.** It's your business, and encourage the staff to feel the same way. Empower them to make decisions in your absence.

**2. Treat Patients Like Family.** Happy patients are your best advocates. Make sure everyone leaves satisfied.

**3. Details Matter.** Keep the office looking clean and attractive. Have current magazines in the reception area.

**4. Be Positive.** Smile. Patients

want to spend their time and money in a place where they are valued.

**5. Who Needs Help?** Find those people and places where eye exams and emergency visits may be needed. Bring business cards to hotels and local businesses.

**6. Befriend the School Nurses.** Bring contact lens solutions and cases to school nurses for students who forget theirs. The nurse can pass along your business card.

**7. Network Everywhere.** Don't leave home without your business cards.

**8. Volunteer.** Support local charity organizations and donate to your patients' charities.



Dr. Schaffer follows her own advice. She arranged to paint a bathroom on a slow day in the office.

**9. Get Political.** Support your state and local optometric society. Be aware of issues that can affect your scope of practice.

**10. Be Passionate.** Give from the heart and have fun. ■