

"See You Next Year—or Sooner"

O.D. encourages yearly visits while advising patients of additional services

"Contact lens wearers' lack of compliance is a cause of contact lens complications," says **Ken Kopolow, O.D.**, of Las Vegas, NV. So the care, cleaning and replacement of contact lenses is a topic of discussion with every contact lens patient. "I'm very diligent in describing what I think should be the wearing schedule and how to use contact lens care products," he says.



Dr. Kopolow

In the exam room, Dr. Kopolow recommends OPTI-FREE® RepleniSH® MPDS by name. "I tell patients that I believe OPTI-FREE RepleniSH has effective antimicrobial properties, provides excellent

comfort and has a low rate of undesirable contact lens/solution interactions," he says. His staff reiterates those key points when explaining why the doctor wants contact lens wearers to use only OPTI-FREE RepleniSH MPDS and not switch to any other solution.

Dr. Kopolow encourages his patients to return for yearly eye health visits, and he takes a moment to explain the other services he can offer them throughout the year. "If patients have symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis or dry eye, I let them know I can help manage those conditions. I tell them that we have a variety of treatments we can try," he says, noting that

patients will remember that when their symptoms flare.

He makes a point of telling contact lens patients about these services because the discomfort from allergies and dry eyes can discourage contact lens wearers from using their lenses. Allergy and dry eye are treatable conditions and can be managed so that patients can continue contact lens wear. "Education results in better compliance, and better compliance results in a better long-term wear experience," he says. ■



ALLDocs Adds Sizzle to Cancun Deal

The ALLDocs board has negotiated an extraordinary price for the all-inclusive, adults-only Le Blanc Spa Resort in Cancun, Mexico, site of the 2009 ALLDocs annual meeting, Nov. 15-19. Now the board adds another enticement—the organization will prepay \$156 per night for up to four nights to ALLDocs members to stay there. (A sister resort for families with



ideas and strategies with colleagues who understand your practice challenges and opportunities. These meetings also provide time for leisurely talk with vendor representatives. Registration forms and membership forms have been mailed to ALLDocs members; both can be found online at alldocsod.com. ■



Le Blanc Spa Resort

children is nearby.) In addition, doctors who attend all lectures and the vendor fair and stay at Le Blanc will receive a rebate after the meeting.

While the financial incentives to come to the meeting are impressive, the real draw of these ALLDocs annual meetings is the opportunity to share

Save the Date

The 2009 ALLDocs meeting will be held Sunday, Nov. 15–Thursday, Nov. 19, 2009, at the all-inclusive Le Blanc Spa Resort in Cancun, Mexico. ■

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**Shake Off the Cold**

As winter begins to release its icy grip, we're all hoping for a warming trend—in the economy as well as the weather. Remember, though, that the cold is



Dr. Gelb

much easier to bear if you're active. That's how we need to approach our practices this year—by being proactive about our business.

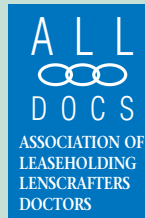
One way to do that is to clear your calendar to come to the 2009 ALLDocs meeting in Cancun, Nov. 15-19. Those who have been to earlier meetings know that the formal education sessions and the informal discussions among colleagues provide an immense number of practical tips and valuable ideas that you can implement when you return to

your practice. We talk about it all: recalls, marketing, patient satisfaction, product mix, medical model and implementing high-tech instrumentation.

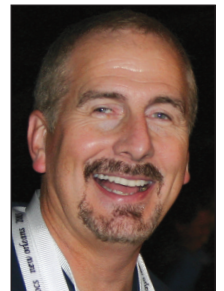
In fact, it's such a good meeting that I encourage you to take two actions immediately: commit to come yourself, and encourage someone else to come, or at least to join ALLDocs. The stronger we are as an organization, the more we can provide to our member doctors.

As your ALLDocs board is preparing the agenda for the 2009 meeting, we welcome your input. Feel free to let me know your thoughts for speakers or topics for the meeting. Also share any suggestions you have for how we can improve the ALLDocs organization web site as well as the templates for individual practices through logicalsolutions.net. ■

Kerry Gelb, O.D.
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**Shop Around to Save on Credit Card Processing**

Shopping around for new credit card services makes sense, says **Bill Fox, O.D.**, who discusses the subject in ALLDocs presentations. Dr. Fox, an ALLDocs board member who has four practices in North Carolina, advises that “companies invariably raise their rates without our knowledge over the years, so looking around is a good way to save some real money.” A year ago, he did exactly



Dr. Fox

that. So he was surprised six months later when **Susan Bobo** with Total Merchant Services (TMS), the only ALLDocs credit card processing sponsor at the national meeting, came by to tell him she could save him money.

His credit card processing was down to 1.83 percent, although with rewards cards and staff forgetting or unable to swipe cards, it averaged 2.12 percent. Bobo, however, knocked his average to overall 1.71 percent. “It has never been that low,” says Dr. Fox. “Part of it was the training she did with the staff identifying and working debit cards [which charge lower fees.]” TMS also allows the practice to see charges and deposits online in real time for each office. “If one office varies a lot from the others, I know the staff aren't following the debit training,” he says.

Based on a \$125 average purchase, the savings is \$0.52 per patient. “For our practice with \$500,000 in credit card purchases, that's a savings of about \$2,100 per year beyond what I thought was the lowest rate I could get,” says Dr. Fox.

Special offer: TMS will work with ALLDocs members to renegotiate credit card fees and is offering free credit card terminals. Contact sbobo@tmsraleigh.com. ■

Two New SYSTANE® Formulations

Alcon Laboratories announced two new products for dry eye relief: SYSTANE® ULTRA Lubricant Eye Drops and SYSTANE® NIGHTTIME Lubricant Eye Ointment. SYSTANE ULTRA features an intelligent delivery system that offers the power of a gel and the ease of a drop. In a recent survey¹, 76 percent of dry eye patients who tried SYSTANE ULTRA reported watching TV and using a computer longer and more comfortably, 75 percent reported reading longer and more comfortably, and 62 percent



reported driving at night more comfortably. Overall, 84 percent of dry eye patients said they preferred SYSTANE ULTRA over the dry eye drop they previously used. For



overnight dry eye protection, SYSTANE NIGHTTIME keeps eyes lubricated and comfortable and locks in moisture, to allow for healing. The

ointment is preservative-free for sensitive eyes. For more information, visit systane.com. ■

¹ Survey of Dry Eye Patients, November 2008. Data on file, Alcon Laboratories, Inc.

Show Patients the Value in Contact Lenses

ALLDocs O.D. explains why fitting CooperVision's Avaira™ enhances practice success



Avaira™ has become Dr. Mulgrew's top choice lens for two-week lens wearers.

By spending a few minutes to learn about your patient's current contact lens routine, you can better present the lens that you feel is best for them, says **Bob Mulgrew, O.D.**, of Tucson, AZ. Dr. Mulgrew, who spoke at the CooperVision National Sales Meeting this past December, explains why Avaira™ contact lenses are his first choice for a two-week disposable lens.

Ask patients about their satisfaction with current lenses and probe for such problems as reduced wearing time due to dry eye symptoms, end-of-day discomfort and hyperemia, he suggests. Learn how the prescribed replacement schedule aligns with actual compliance. It is always essential to present the best options to patients. "You have to provide the most comfortable contact lens, the best vision, the latest technology and, more importantly in today's economic climate, create value for the lens you choose," he adds. "Fortunately, the Avaira lens provides all of these attributes."

Determine whether the patient is technology-driven or price-driven (Avaira is suited to both types). Also, think about

how the lens you suggest will aid in the promotion of an annual supply. "In tough economic times, patients are more likely to stretch their wearing schedule. It's more important than ever to explain the risks of noncompliance. With annual supplies, patients are more likely to discard the lenses as prescribed," he says. "This option is healthier for patients *and* for the practice since patients are less likely to seek alternative contact lens options, and your staff won't need to refill orders every six months."

With its high 125 Dk/t, Avaira promotes healthy corneal physiology, and this third-generation silicone hydrogel has the new Aquaform surface technology that is sure to impress a patient who has been complaining of dry eyes and lens discomfort. The lens features a UV inhibitor, a feature parents find particularly beneficial, he says.

"It's priced competitively with any silicone hydrogel on the market," says Dr. Mulgrew. "With CooperVision's promotions, I can get my per-box price down to \$15." A key factor for Dr. Mulgrew is

that the patient's rebate for four or eight boxes can only be used if the lenses are purchased at his office.

Dr. Mulgrew recommends Avaira for patients who use their contact lenses on a daily wear basis. An excellent alternative for extended wear patients is CooperVision's Biofinity® lenses. Have both Avaira and Biofinity trials fully stocked, and since same-day dispensing is important, stock inventory for your most common prescriptions, he says. CooperVision representatives can provide doctors with trial lenses and will work to solve any patient-related problems. CooperVision also offers the 'It's Okay' guarantee, so Dr. Mulgrew says he can "guarantee to our patients that we will exchange lenses and provide whatever service is necessary to keep our patients happy. This is a strong marketing advantage over mail-order companies and wholesale stores." ■

Borrowing the Best Ideas

Steve Lutz, O.D., of Ann Arbor, MI, believes that one of the smartest business decisions he's ever made was to join ALLDocs. In an open letter he wrote to leaseholding O.D.s, which can be found in its entirety on the web site alldocsod.com, he wrote:

"When I first became an ALLDocs member in 1995, my practice was grossing slightly above the national average for private O.D.s. I am now grossing more than *triple* the national average. While I would love



Dr. Lutz

to attribute this increase to my superior clinical skills and expert business acumen, the reality is that most of this increase is directly attributed to what I learned and what changes I instituted from attending the annual ALLDocs meetings. The beauty of the group is that you don't have to reinvent the wheel. We have very smart doctors in many different disciplines, practicing in exactly the same environment as you. You can 'borrow' their ideas and methods."

Dr. Lutz continues, describing tech-

nology implementation that added \$50,000 in net revenue in one year, and he describes the luxurious accommodations and beautiful scenery that are a part of every ALLDocs meeting. Dr. Lutz encourages ALLDocs members—and new members joining now—to take advantage of the ALLDocs offer to create a professional looking practice web site for just \$1,000 through logical-solutions.net. ALLDocs platinum sponsors Alcon and CooperVision have provided financial support.

Dr. Lutz's letter, the 2009 membership form and information on the web site templates are available at alldocsod.com. ■

IMPLEMENTING THE TOTAL PATIENT CARE MODEL

C'mon...I Dare You!

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

One of the most pervasive themes throughout our country within the last year was *change*. The electorate was restless as people faced challenges that have not been seen in a generation. *Change* drove political ideology and made history, and now change is driving decisions in economic policy as financial unease rises.

To many of you, incorporating the medical model within your practice represents a significant change from what you are doing now. For the past several years, I have espoused the benefits of practicing to the highest level of your training—not only for the benefit of your patients' convenience and health, but also for your personal benefit and the economic impact on your practice. Yet, many of you have hesitated or are waiting for the "right time" to incorporate medical eye care within your practice. Why the hesitation? I'm not sure, but the one thing that I *am* sure of is that the time is now to incorporate this *change* into your practice. In fact, I dare you!

I dare you to benchmark your practice today by analyzing what percentage of your revenue comes from medical eye care. Then incorporate one or a few simple elements of the medical model into your practice. Benchmark it again in three months. I dare you to compare!

I dare you to diagnose and treat allergy. I dare you to diagnose and treat dry eye. I dare you to take the extra 15 seconds to make a firm recommendation to your patients about the pharmaceutical agents, artificial tear agents and contact lens solutions you want them to use. If you don't, they'll be left confused at the pharmacy or grocery store with the myriad of choices before them. I dare you!

I dare you to use your education to your advantage and to your patients' advantage. Your patients want to benefit from your education. They want to know your recommendations, and they want to know that they can obtain their medical eye care from someone they are familiar with and trust. I dare you!

Change. The time is now: not tomorrow, not next month or next quarter. Don't be afraid of change, but anticipate, embrace, direct and control it within your practice. I am confident that if you incorporate the medical model within your practice you will see a positive change, not only in your patients' understanding of what you do, but in higher levels of personal and professional satisfaction and an increased bottom line.

Change! C'mon...I dare you! ■



Dr. Rumpakis

Ocular Vitamins Can Boost Ocular Health

Studies clearly have indicated that nutrition is key in maintaining healthy eyes. Just like the rest of the body, the eyes need the right amounts of certain nutrients to work their best.

Unfortunately, more than 90 percent of Americans do not eat enough of the proper foods to provide the right amount of nutrition essential to ocular health. Extended periods of dosing with high-potency antioxidants along with zinc have proven effective in the



prevention of age-related eye disease.

There are three formulations of ICaps® vitamins. The ICaps® MV Eye Vitamin and Mineral Supplement is a lutein- and zeaxanthin-enriched

multivitamin providing high levels of lutein and zeaxanthin for eye health in a formula for overall body health. It is based on the formula from the 2001 Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS), and it combines the essential eye and body vitamins and minerals in one formulation for increased convenience.

ICaps® Softgel AREDS Formula contains the identical dosage of vitamins and minerals clinically proven in the AREDS by the National Eye Institute. This study demonstrated that high levels of antioxidants and zinc reduced the risk of progression of age-related macular degeneration by about 25 percent in patients most at risk for age-related vision loss. Carotenoids are a nutrient group important to eye health. Foremost is beta carotene (Vitamin A), which is found in red and orange vegetables.

The ICaps® Lutein & Zeaxanthin formula has the high-potency antioxidants and zinc important to eye health, plus the added benefit of lutein and zeaxanthin. ■