

ABB Optical Group Brings New Technology Solution To Its Members In 2022

Doctors expects Abby software to bring efficiencies and reduce pain points in contact lens orders

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Mary Anne Murphy, OD, of Front Range Eye Associates in Broomfield, Colorado, had been asking her ABB Optical Group account manager for the past year if she could be a pilot site for any new contact lens-ordering system that ABB might launch. She got that chance in February, and her office is now one of the test sites for Abby, the patient-friendly and convenient web-based contact lens ordering system that keeps patients connected to eye care practitioners. ABB will be rolling out this program to more practices this year.

"What I find so exciting is the philosophy behind this," says Dr. Murphy. "ABB developed this for private practice doctors to help us keep this contact lens business in our offices and stay connected with our patients. ABB is using its resources and platform to encourage our patients to fill the remainder of their contact lens prescriptions with us."

It's been no small undertaking for the distributor to take on the challenge of developing this program and doing the training for practices, she says.



Learn more at helloabby.com.

The Abby platform is the only one of its kind in the industry that is free to use and connects both patients and providers with contact lenses from every major manufacturer. Plus, it features customer-friendly perks like free direct-to-patient shipping, no-hassle returns and time-saving features like order tracking and more.

COHESIVE, NOT SCATTERED

Although patients can order contact lenses on-line, it has felt a little disconnected.

"Some vendors offer the service directly, but then we have to go to different platforms. What's unique about Abby is that the branding is from our own practices, not a service. The reminder texts and packaging all look like they come from us. Patients are connecting to this ABB-powered system, but it feels to them like they're connecting to my office," says Dr. Murphy.

In addition, ABB has already proven itself capable of managing the volume. "This is a distributor that is accustomed to volume. Contact lens manufacturers' strength is in manufacturing, but ABB specializes in timely delivery. The company has the infrastructure in place," she says.

ADDRESSING THE PAIN POINTS



ABB developed Abby specifically to help address the pressure and pain points that ECPs experience. From an operational focus, ECPs want to ensure patient and practice safety, a new focus that arose during the pandemic but remains a priority; increase their revenues; and improve their efficiencies.

Many are concerned that online competition, especially in contact lens sales, and the degradation of the doctor-patient relationship that can result mean lost revenue for the practice.

Furthermore, about two-thirds of employers are struggling with finding and retaining great staff. There is no question that keeping a contact lens inventory up to date is an important task, but is it the best use of staff time in this environment?

Although Dr. Murphy's team includes a dedicated contact lens staff member, that employee had been spending a significant portion of her time ordering, checking in, inventorying and completing the transaction with patients. In addition, her task list included calling patients if they were due for a refill. "It's not a sexy job, but it can bite you in the behind if you don't do it," Dr. Murphy says. Abby takes over many of those details by sending automated messages to patients at intervals when they should be due for refills.

ABB data found that when ordering from multiple suppliers—with all of the related steps—it takes 28 minutes, on average, of staff time. Practices can shave that down to just 11.8 minutes per order when orders are consolidated with one supplier—and when practices promote direct-to-patient shipments, those orders average just 3.8 minutes. Now Abby can reduce the time even more.

PATIENTS WANT IT EASY

Providing great service is a hallmark of Dr. Murphy's practice. "It is the culture of our office to offer the newest technology to patients," she says. That extends to product delivery, she says. "If there's a glitch, patients will remember that."

Abby is set up to help ECPs stay connected with their contact lens patients and create more

consistency in the presentation. "My staff is very good about reminding patients that they get better pricing if they purchase an annual supply, but there are busy days when this messaging might fall through. Abby will prompt patients right from the start, letting them know their savings. The system will also prompt patients when the rebate period is about to expire, reminding them that they can still purchase their annual supply now and reap the savings. "Those are huge opportunities, but they would be so difficult to track for staff members," Dr. Murphy says.

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