A new *Digital Price Monitor* is available to ABB Optical Group members via the ECP Tools page

ABB Optical Group

#3 2024

THE PROFIT ADVISOR

Business Strategies for ABB Optical Group Customers

SEE WHAT ABB DELIVERS

Get one-stop shopping for lab jobs, contact lenses and business solutions.

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ABB Labs is a **VSP Enabled Laboratory**

ABB Optical Group is proud of its ability to fabricate all VSP Unity lens designs and antireflective (AR) coatings in-house at ABB Labs facilities located in the U.S. So for those customers who have heard that VSP Vision is winding down some operations, rest assure that ABB Labs, as a VSP Enabled Laboratory, will continue to provide you with excellent service and without disruptions.

In fact, ABB Labs is the largest independent Unity distributor in the market and winner of multiple VSP Unity Independent Lab of the Year awards. The ABB Labs Rewards on Unity program is consistent with those rewards offered through VSPOne® labs, resulting in improved profitability for practices. ABB customers interested in learning more about our Quarterly Rewards on Unity Program should reach out directly to their account manager or email ABBLabs@abboptical.com.

As a VSP Enabled Laboratory, ABB Labs can fabricate VSP lens designs and coatings in-house, including Unity, Shamir, Seiko, Essilor and ABB Labs. Receive your high-quality lenses and coatings with a fast turnaround time and exceptional customer service.

Switching over?

Your ABB Optical Sales Consultant will work alongside their VSP counterpart to transition your business over to ABB Labs with continued exceptional service. Once that is completed, you can easily select ABB Labs as your VSP Enabled Laboratory on eyefinity.com.

If you have any questions regarding this change or would like more information about setting up ABB Labs as your VSP Enabled Laboratory, please reach out to your ABB Optical Sales Consultant. PA

ABB Optical Group

THE PROFIT ADVISOR

#3 2024 • Volume 20, Issue 3

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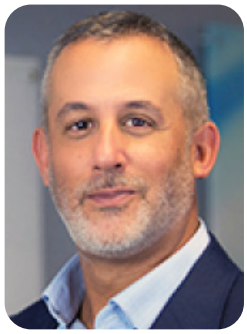
ABB LABS: MORE THAN LENSES



Scott Pearl

A Q&A with Scott Pearl, Senior Vice President and General Manager of ABB Labs

Q: How has ABB Labs changed over recent years, particularly in terms of advancements in technology and services that have been brought in?

A: ABB Labs has a strong history and ongoing commitment to investment in our U.S.-based laboratories. In just the past two years, we've brought tremendous new capabilities to two of our facilities.

In 2023, we completed a multi-million-dollar expansion to our Hawthorne, New York, facility. This included additional square footage as well as new state-of-the-art equipment throughout our surfacing, AR coating, edging and inspection departments. This expansion has not only greatly increased our capacity, but it has allowed us to provide best-in-class turn time to our customers.

In 2024, we have continued to invest in edging technology and new equipment – in New York and Michigan and by enhancing our state-of-the-art 42,000-square-foot eyeglass laboratory in Erlanger, Kentucky. The New York and Kentucky facilities are full-service laboratories that fabricate all parts of our portfolio, while the Michigan facility is a full-service laboratory that specializes in high-end frame mounting.

Q: Do those developments enhance customer service or choice or pricing?

A: Yes to all of the above. We are able to process jobs with greater efficiency and predictability. We can expand our offerings for high-quality lab work with a fast turnaround time. And our greater volume capabilities help control costs. All of those benefits are passed along to the ABB Labs accounts, which in turn are able to offer their patients and customers a wide range of choices at excellent pricing with reliable and fast completion.

Being an independent lab allows us to serve the best interests of your practice with a wide range of customized solutions. That's a clear advantage for your business and patients. Whether you need product support, expert guidance or fast delivery, ABB can deliver on all of those aspects.

Q: In addition to technology and expanding footprints, how has ABB Labs' customer service team evolved to be more responsive?

A: Our people are central to the success at ABB Labs. Our newest customer service agents come from the optical industry. Many are licensed opticians and understand the day-to-day challenges for our customers. So they are able to anticipate customers' questions and understand the importance of good communication.

As an independent lab, we are brand-neutral and care-focused, meaning we offer top name brands in addition to our proprietary lenses. We do this for one simple reason — our primary focus is your success.

In addition to answering the phones and answering emails, our customer service team manages the live chat functionality on our website as well as SMS text capabilities. Some practices are too busy to call in—it's easy for them to hop online and chat or send a text message. Our team is here to serve your team—in any way that makes it simpler and more convenient for you.

Q: How important is the workplace culture at ABB Labs?

A: The entire ABB Labs team creates a positive work environment by embracing things like true accessibility through open-door policies, your voice matters and no hierarchy rules—because we are all teammates. These internal cultural improvements ultimately circle back to how our teams interact with customers in an empathetic and caring way.

We're proud of being an independent lab that serves the best interests of your practice with a wide range of customized solutions. We believe in the mission of supporting your business and patients. Whether you need product support, expert guidance or fast delivery, experience the power of independence and quality from ABB Labs.

Learn more at abboptical.com/abb-labs. PA

EMPOWERING INDEPENDENT EYE CARE PRACTICES

In the world of eye care, independence is more than just a business model—it's a philosophy that drives growth, innovation and patient-centered care. In these cover stories, a common theme emerges: the business partnership with ABB Optical Group has empowered independent practices to flourish while maintaining their autonomy.

For **Mitra Madison, OD**, the journey began with a desire to break away from corporate affiliations and establish her own path. With ABB's support, her practices in Virginia not only thrived but also embraced technological advancements that enhanced patient care and operational efficiency. ABB's comprehensive services, from lab innovations to streamlined ordering systems, have allowed Dr. Madison's practices to focus on what matters most: the patients.

Similarly, the **Eyes on Group** in Massachusetts and Rhode Island found in ABB a business partner that could simplify processes across multiple locations. The ability to offer high-quality products at competitive prices, combined with ABB's cutting-edge Abby platform, has been a game changer. It has not only boosted direct-to-patient sales but also freed up valuable time for doctors and staff to concentrate on delivering exceptional care.

For **Makenzie Elliott, OD**, the legacy of independence passed down from her father is central to the Massachusetts practice's identity. Maintaining autonomy allows her practice to provide personalized care and access to a diverse range of products that meet the unique needs of their patients. ABB's role in supporting this independence has been crucial, enabling the practice to stay true to its values while navigating the complexities of modern eye care.

These stories highlight the vital role that independence plays in the success of eye care practices. By working with ABB Optical Group, these practices have been able to grow, innovate and, most importantly, deliver the highest quality of care to their communities. PA

A 20-Year Business Partnership:
Evolving Eye Care with ABB Optical Group

For nearly 20 years, **Mitra Madison, OD**, has been on a journey with ABB Optical Group in some form. The practice started as Dr. Madison and her late husband decided to branch out from a corporate-affiliated location. They opened two practices–Sight Studio Optometry in historic downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Eye Care Doctors of Optometry in a nearby shopping center. For the first two years as independent practice owners, the doctors leaned into their relationship with ABB, with soft contact lenses and stock lenses for their in-house lab, Dr. Madison recalls.

The practice "grew from a small business to a large, two-practice operation by consistently integrating ABB's soft lenses and stock lens business," says **Karina Saburova**, optical administrator.

"This was one of the first practices I went to when ABB started offering full lab services with Digital Eye Lab [now ABB Labs]," says **Tina Howell**, ABB Optical Sales Consultant. "The practice has always been forward-thinking and innovative. The doctors understood the true benefits of digital freeform." As ABB expanded its offerings, including with soft contact lenses and stock lenses, the team explored how these innovations could benefit their practices. "At our downtown location, adding a second internal lab increased our efficiency," she says.

Sarah Velazquez, and Dr. Madison.

Being able to leverage ABB's unmatched pricing and availability is important. Saburova says, "Our patients and staff love the Unlimited Progressive lenses. These lenses offer great performance at very reasonable prices and offer tremendous value. We also enjoy receiving next-day shipments of our stock lenses and soft contact lenses." ABB Prime AR (antireflective) products feature high-quality value lenses in clear AR and in-mass blue light protection lenses with AR. The practice can provide patients cost-effective, high-quality AR options.

David Singer, ABB Lab Account Manager, says, "We have worked together to find an ideal mix of name-brand and proprietary lens designs. The patient wins with the best technology and performance, and the practice wins by maximizing its capture rate and profitability. Their success is our success, and we all win together."

From 0 to 95

The relationship with ABB has also helped the practice streamline operations and improve patient satisfaction. As ABB brought in more business pillars to help support independent practices, the doctors took advantage of those. For example, when ABB introduced Abby, its online contact lens ordering platform that practices and patients can use, "we went all in," says **Sarah Velazquez**, practice manger. "Now,

95% of our contact lens orders go through Abby, making it easier for both staff and patients."

Dr. Madison and the two other doctors mention Abby generally during exams as a convenient and reliable way for patients to order their contact lenses. Then the optical staff reinforces the benefits when discussing insurance benefits and purchasing with patients.

Tina Howell

David Singer

Velazquez says everyone appreciates the convenience that Abby provides. "Patients who are hesitant to purchase in-store can still buy from us online later," she says. "The ease of reordering through Abby has been a game changer."

Saburova notes that because Abby sends patients reminders that it's time to reorder or renew their prescription, she can track that information without having to scan patient records manually for who might be due for such a reminder. It has also minimized the amount of time that she spends on tracking where orders are and needing to call with updates. Abby offers patients the chance to see and track their own orders. "The tracking capability through Abby versus phone calls and hold times has improved patient satisfaction," she says.

Velazquez points out the time and cost savings. "Staff time is a significant expense, and having a system like Abby cuts down on the need for additional staff," she says. First, patients don't become frustrated trying to reach the busy office for an update—and staff members can focus on the patients in the office rather than these kinds of disruptions to the day.

Although the practice has not been measuring the impact of capture rate specifically, it's likely that it has increased. Saburova says that she routinely sees the notifications from Abby that patients placed an order over the weekend, for example.

Dependability

As a business owner, Dr. Madison appreciates ABB's comprehensive approach. "We want to work with businesses that support us and provide better services for our patients," she says. "ABB has been there for us, helping with various challenges."

For example, she can hand off the details of her specialty contact lens orders to Saburova, knowing that ABB's specialty vision products consultants will help her identify which initial lens to order for patients. She also values ABB's dependability and input. She meets regularly with her ABB's Tina Howell. "The regular Business Reviews help us identify areas for improvement. The reports are beneficial, allowing us to fine-tune our practice."

Velazquez agrees that ABB's reporting helps the practice track metrics that matter. Over the past several years, the practice has used different electronic health record systems. "They've each had their own functionality and reporting aspects," she says. Yet ABB's Business Review provides a consistent look at key metrics such as contact lenses sold across all the vendors and annual supply rates.

All of these staff- and time-intensive tasks are easier to manage. From having contact lenses shipped directly to the patients, receiving in-depth reports on how the business is trending and knowing that stock lenses that keep the in-house lab humming are on track means that the doctors and staff have more time to focus on the patients themselves.

"Our relationship with ABB has been integral to our growth and success. ABB's innovations, support and reliability have allowed us to focus on providing the best care for our patients," Dr. Madison says. PA

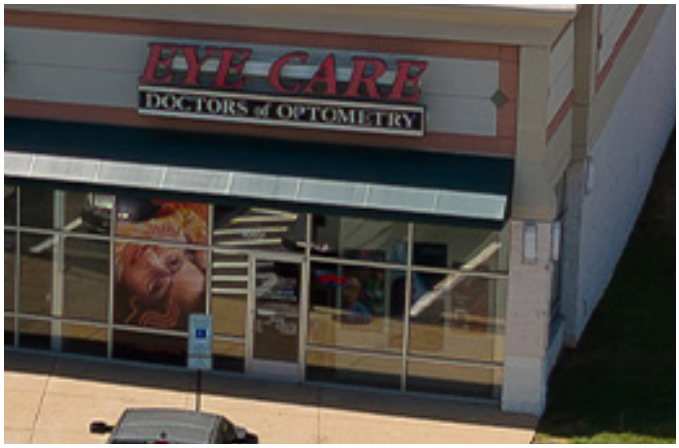
ABB Labs: Experience the Difference of an Independent Lab Network

Brand Agnostic:
Offering you access and choice to the products you use the most

Customized Digital Lenses:
Digital fabrication for variations in prescription, measurements and frame designs

Optimized for Speed:
Multiple fabrication lines and lens finishing centers to manufacture and deliver lenses faster

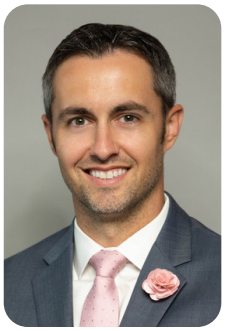
Innovative Portfolio:
Top brand and cutting-edge technology to provide patients with premium products



The doctors opened two practices—Sight Studio Optometry in historic downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Eye Care Doctors of Optometry in a nearby shopping center.

ABB Optical Group Services **Simplify Processes for Four-Location Practice**

With a large, multilocation practice and a growing patient base with diverse needs, **Nick Feucht, OD**, and **Nikhil Saini, OD**, partners with the Eyes on Group in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, were looking for an industry vendor that could help them simplify their processes. They found that relationship in ABB Optical Group.



Dr. Feucht

Working with ABB has allowed the practice with locations in Worcester, Randolph, Lincoln and Cranston to streamline processes, enhance patient experiences and maintain competitive pricing—all while staying true to its core values of compassion, integrity and transparency.

Independent lab

The Eyes on Group started working with ABB Labs in 2018 to ensure that patients receive high-quality products at competitive prices. The lab's willingness to work closely with the practice, even in challenging situations, has proven invaluable. Whether dealing with tough cases or resolving issues like progressive non-adaptations, ABB's lab representatives have always been ready to find solutions. Opticians can explain to patients that if there's an issue with the adaptation, for example, they can switch back to single vision lenses without an extra charge. That provides patients with much more confidence to buy eyewear that is almost certainly going to be a better option for them.

This not only helps them maintain healthy margins but also allows them to provide quality products at affordable prices, particularly through ABB's cost-effective G PAL progressive lens. It's an ideal entry point to progressive wear for many presbyopes, says Dr. Feucht. "It is a great-quality product at a low price, that provides us with impressive margins. We get a lot of positive feedback about this product with very few non-adapts. Also, the practice takes full advantage of ABB's extensive selection of stock lenses, which offer a variety of materials and enhancement options. "

Direct-to-patient sales boost

The integration of ABB's Abby platform has further simplified operations, particularly with contact lens orders. With about 80% of their patients using daily lenses, the practice has seen significant improvements in direct-to-patient shipments, which have increased from 50% to 72%. Abby's automatic reminders for reordering have been instrumental in keeping patients engaged and preventing them from seeking alternatives elsewhere.

Dr. Saini

Abby sends out automatic text and e-mail reminders to patients when it's time to reorder their lenses. "We try hard to encourage our patients to purchase a year's supply of contacts at their annual eye exam. We do this mainly so they can take advantage of manufacturer rebates," Dr. Saini says. "However, when patients choose to purchase a three- or six-month supply, we love Abby because the platform automatically messages the patient that it's time to reorder."

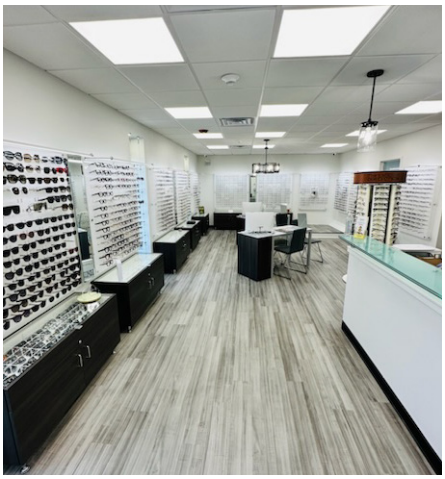
Abby also provides tremendous oversight. Patients appreciate the user-friendly aspects, and the doctors and practice managers can look at the dashboard that provides real-time updates on orders, helping the practice stay organized and informed. The added feature of a comprehensive reporting section has also enabled the practice to monitor trends more easily.

Support from the sales team

The practice has also benefited from the exceptional service provided by ABB's representatives, who have been pivotal in streamlining the lens menu and offering ongoing support. The team's approach has always been solution-oriented, ensuring that any issues, from non-adapts to lens defects, are addressed promptly and without hassle, the doctors say. This level of service contributes to a smooth and efficient operation, allowing the practice to focus on patient care.

For example, the combination of data from the Digital Price Monitor with Abby has also been transformational, allowing the practice to remain competitive without the need for extensive price research. The platform automatically adjusts prices based on online retailer trends, saving the practice time and effort. The Business Reviews with ABB Optical Sales Consultants add depth and context to the data.

The doctors feel as though the ABB Account Managers are true consultants. "A little over year ago, our ABB Labs Account



Eyes on Group have multiple locations in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Manager came to one of our offices to help us design a newer and simpler lens menu. She gave a presentation to our staff about each lens on our new lens menu. She was kind enough to give advice and pointers and how to upsell ABB's products to provide our patients with the best experience possible," Dr. Feucht says.

Focused on growth

Individually, the kinds of analyses and tasks that are being done by ABB would take the practice staff and doctors hours. One of their goals had been to provide a great contact lens ordering platform for their patients, for example. They knew that they were missing contact lens orders that people were placing online rather than waiting to call the office during business hours. ABB created such a platform with Abby, allowing the practice to be at the forefront of the technology the patients want.

Direct-to-patient shipments have increased from 50% to 72%.

"Our practice goals and core values have never changed from day one of opening the practices: Deliver excellent patient care through compassion and empathy and serve our community with the utmost passion, integrity and transparency. ABB has been an integral part of goals and core values because our business models and values align. Providing an excellent patient experience is very important to us, and we are proud to work with a business that values our patients just as much as we do," says Dr. Saini.

With that kind of support, it allows the doctors and staff members to focus on the patients who are in the office, improving the patient experience and enhancing the relationship with the practice. PA

A Proven Advantage for Your Practice

ABB Business Solutions is a comprehensive suite of technology tools designed to help your eye care practice achieve long-term cost savings and grow your business, all while minimizing staff workload. ABB provides technology solutions that simplify every aspect of your business, empowering you to focus on what matters most—patient care.

ABB Verify delivers a real-time advantage

ABB Verify provides a powerful solution to simplify insurance verification, enabling your practice to enjoy numerous benefits. These benefits include saving valuable staff time and increasing operational efficiency. With ABB Verify, your team can focus more on patient interaction, leading to improved patient satisfaction and a thriving practice. Trust ABB to streamline your insurance verification process, and experience the confidence that comes with it.

ABB Analyze makes business clear and simple

Running a successful business requires making informed and strategic decisions. Don't operate your business blindly when it comes to understanding your data. ABB Analyze is the ultimate solution for efficiently tracking and analyzing your data. ABB's performance dashboards provide a clear and concise view of your practice's performance, whether you have one location or multiple. Unlike practice management reports that simply present data, ABB Analyze goes further by converting your data into actionable insights. This way, you can understand your performance and make informed decisions to take your business to the next level.

ABB Optical Group MOMENT MAKER

How ABB Staff Help You Create MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Customer Service Representative **Saffronica Walters** has worked in Customer Service at ABB for almost 5 years and is a valuable asset for ECPs. A customer recently shared that Saffronica was "a breath of fresh air." She assisted with adjusting pricing on Abby and has helped on similar questions before. She explains things well and makes it so easy for a practice.

Optical Sales Consultant **Kaila Dunn** is consistently one of ABB's top sales consultants in the country and supports bringing enterprise value to ABB's practices. That provides these accounts more time to focus on what matters most. Customers recommend ABB because they have a helpful rep like Kaila who is always so knowledgeable and supportive.

Independence a Hallmark in **This Legacy Practice**

Makenzie Elliott, OD, has learned important lessons from her father, **Paul Elliott, OD, JD**. He started and still owns Elliott Eye Doctors and The Optical Shoppe, with locations in Foxborough, Milford and Norton, Massachusetts.

The practice is "literally in my old home. I grew up in the house and lived here until I was 11. He was a solo doctor and had a few offices, spending two or three days in each one," says Dr. Makenzie Elliot. She started working in the practice when she was 13, before studying biology and chemistry as an undergraduate. After graduating from the New England College of Optometry, she joined the practice in 2014.

Dr. Elliott has put her stamp on it. She switched to an electronic health records system and added technology. She also remodeled all three locations, ultimately moved one, and hired two doctors.

"Now we're a multidoctor, multilocation practice with 35,000 patients in our database. We work hard to provide our patients with the best experience through a technology-enabled exam. It's important that we keep up with the trends and innovations," she says.

Dr. Makenzie Elliot began working with her father, Dr. Paul Elliot, when she was 13.

While the practice also prides itself on providing a luxury experience—we do take all insurance. We believe in providing eye care to everyone who needs it," she says.

Maintaining independence

Dr. Elliott says she appreciates the legacy of this independent practice. "It's important to keep our autonomy, those roots. We're sought out because patients feel like we have a history in this community and a reputation for doing what's best for the patients. Our doctors are in full control; we're all professionals, and we respect doctors' decisions. We all see what is best for the business and best for patients."

It's one reason the practice has aligned for so long with ABB Optical Group. "It's great for us to have a one-stop shop for our soft contact lenses, specialty lenses such as orthokeratology and scleral lenses, and lab orders or stock lenses," she says. Otherwise, the oversight would become too complex. "Having your hand in 50 pots is difficult to manage. But with one group, we not only simplify the management aspect, but we create a better relationship. We know that if we need a favor, ABB will deliver for us."

The practice maintains its in-house lab in its Foxborough office, with two edgers, two tracers and two lab staff. "We also have three opticians and two apprentices who all participate in some way in the labs. They can help out or finish jobs if the floor is slow," Dr. Elliott says.

Just as it is important for patients to have choices based on the doctors' recommendations, it's equally important that the practice has access to a variety of products. "My dad feels very strongly that in order to practice at the highest level medically, we need to have independence and the full range of choices. That extends to providing materials for our patients. ABB provides us with access to a wide range of high-quality products."

The philosophy that independence is good for business and for patients is another inherited belief being passed from one generation to the next. PA

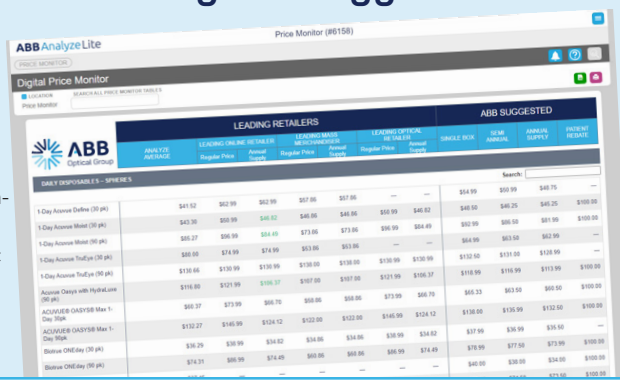
ABB Optical Group MOMENT MAKER

How ABB Staff Help You Create MOMENTS THAT MATTER

ABB Labs Customer Service Representative **Lain Barton** has been recognized for consistently providing great quality service for ABB Labs customers. When customers need the extra help, Lain is always there for them. Customers appreciate her patience and inviting presence over the phone, which makes them feel more comfortable asking questions to get to the right solution for their patients.

Build a Confident Pricing Strategy

For years, thousands of eye care professionals have been using actionable data to help them set their pricing strategy. This web-accessible dashboard includes access to nine key practice-specific metrics through ABB Analyze Lite.



TRANSITIONS® GEN S™ CHANGES THE DYNAMIC IN BOUTIQUE OPTICAL

When **Kimberly Peters** opened the boutique optical store, Eyes on Main, in Carmel, Indiana, five years ago, she wasn't expecting *Transitions®* lenses to be a hot commodity. "Historically, I wasn't great at selling them," she admits. She thought of them more as a niche product with more appeal to the practical than the stylish. About 10% of her customers chose the brand, she recalls.

However, that all changed with *Transitions® GEN S™* lenses and the jewel-tone colors. "The dynamic completely shifted. The Sapphire lenses have been our strongest color," she says. "The Ruby made me realize these were not my grandfather's *Transitions* – and the rose tint on the lenses made me a believer."

The vibrant new colors resonated with a broader audience. The new styles have proven to be both fashionable and functional, a perfect match for customers who, like her, are seeking simplicity in their lives. "We're all looking for a simpler lifestyle," says Peters. "My purse is smaller—I don't want to carry around multiple pairs of glasses. It's a lifestyle choice."

At Eyes on Main, the conversation about *Transitions* starts with a question: "Are you interested in *Transitions*? Have you tried them before?" For Peters, the key to success lies in educating customers about the benefits and letting them

Tony and Kimberly Peters at Eyes on Main

experience the lenses firsthand. The store uses a UV light box to demonstrate how the lenses darken, and Peters often takes customers outside so they can see the change in real time. "We have a whiteboard where we show how quickly the lenses fade back. It makes the process more fun and engaging."

Customers can match frames with lenses to create their own fabulous combinations. And while they're looking at the options, Peters can reinforce the benefits of wearing lenses with blue-violet light* and ultraviolet light protection. "They're pretty much virtually clear indoors," Peters says, noting that this addresses a common worry among customers who fear their lenses will look too dark indoors.

Ultimately, *Transitions GEN S* lenses provide patients with the control they want over their eyewear decisions. They have a chance to see and experience the technology and determine if it's right for them.

Peters notes that the business relationship with ABB Optical Group is helpful in building the business. "I've used several labs over the past 30 years, and I've never been as satisfied as I am with ABB. ABB Labs delivers customer service and quality of product," she says. Peters and her husband, **Tony Peters**, who manages the in-house lab, work with **Diana Prljevic, OD**, in this location owned by **Kevin Kretch, LDO**, who also owns Eyes on Chagrin in Cleveland, Ohio.

With innovative products from Transitions and the support she gets from ABB, Peters is confident that Eyes on Main is well-equipped to meet the needs of its customers. PA

* Blue-violet light is between 400 and 455nm (ISO TR 20772:2018)

Transitions is a registered trademark of Transitions Optical, Inc. Used under license by Transitions Optical Limited. GEN S is a trademark of Transitions Optical Limited. ©2024 Transitions Optical Limited. Photochromic performance may vary across colors and lens materials and is influenced by temperature and UV exposure.

Excellent Work Rewarded

Congratulations to Manager, Consultation and Education, Specialty Vision Products, **Dede Reyes**, one of Vision Monday's 2024 Most Influential Women in Optical. Her leadership in specialty contact lens consultation truly makes a positive impact on ABB's practices and their patients.

Dede Reyes poses at the Mentors winner banner.

The ABB team helps Dede Reyes celebrate: (l-r): Senior Manager Marketing Operations, Katherine Ronan; Dede Reyes; Vendor Marketing Manager Cathy Truong; and Senior Manager, Business Solution Sales Sonja Del Rios.

ASTIGMATISM PATIENTS BENEFIT FROM EXPANDED LENS OPTIONS

First patients fit with lens comment on its comfort and stability

At the nine-OD practice, Lakeline Vision Source in Cedar Park, Texas, partner **Eric Hammond, OD**, says the doctors have begun embracing Bausch + Lomb INFUSE® for Astigmatism lenses, anticipating significant benefits for their practices and patients.

The practice has done well with Bausch + Lomb INFUSE spherical and INFUSE Multifocal lenses. The $300 rebate offered by Bausch + Lomb made it easier to attract patients to try this lens. The doctors in the practice have worked extensively with Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® lenses as well and were impressed with the optics in the multifocal design. "The fact that the INFUSE used the same design but gave us an option for fitting patients with daily lenses was great. We leaned into upgrading patients into daily lenses, and our patients have responded positively," he says.

Now the INFUSE material, which blends osmoprotectants, electrolytes and moisturizers, ensuring up to 16 hours of moisture, is also available for astigmatic patients. He expects the brand to have similar appeal to this large segment of the population that has either been wearing monthly toric lenses or perhaps compromising acuity by masking astigmatism with a spherical lens.

Dr. Hammond sees the INFUSE lenses as a valuable upgrade for patients who previously used monthly lenses or had comfort issues with older daily designs. "Everyone can be a candidate," he asserts, emphasizing the importance of offering high-quality lenses to every patient. The fact that the high-value rebate brings the patient price down is also very attractive.

Patient response has been very good, he says, with patients finding it comfortable. "We ask patients if they're struggling with comfort, and with INFUSE, they rarely are," Dr. Hammond adds.

Ease of fit

Bausch + Lomb has designed three different fit set configurations of the INFUSE for Astigmatism lens based on each practice's needs. The availability of -2.25D and -2.75D cylinders in the fit set offers versatility, allowing Dr. Hammond to cater to a broader spectrum of patients. He appreciates that Bausch + Lomb has created comprehensive fitting sets that help doctors and patients save valuable chair time.

Dr. Hammond

INFUSE for Astigmatism is designed to provide clear vision. It is optimized across the entire range for clear vision and designed to help reduce halos and glare, even in low light. The lenses feature a thin-edge design to minimize lid interaction and an innovative OpticAlign® design with a stabilization feature in the lower hemisphere.

The quick stabilization is important in this busy practice. With nine doctors, the practice has already outgrown the new office the owner built eight years ago. So it's important that contact lens fittings are an efficient process, says Dr. Hammond.

"The stability with the OpticAlign design is excellent," he notes. A recent study from Bausch + Lomb showed that 95% of INFUSE for Astigmatism lenses settled within 30 seconds, and 97% exhibited less than three degrees of rotation with blink.

Being able to demonstrate the acuity that comes with a toric lens is key, also for patients who have astigmatism in only one eye. Being able to keep them in the same family of contact lenses is more convenient for the patient.

> *"The stability with the OpticAlign® design is excellent."*
>
> *— Dr. Hammond*

Patients who come to this practice expect the doctors and practice to be up on the latest offerings. "Patients routinely ask, 'Am I in one of the newer lenses?' They expect that from this office," says Dr. Hammond. PA

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High-definition optics help minimize spherical aberration for clear vision[1]

Optimized across the entire power range in both axes to help reduce halos and glare, even in low light.[1]

MODEL EYE (+0.18 µM SPHERICAL ABERRATION)†

MODEL EYE (+0.18 µM SPHERICAL ABERRATION) + INFUSE®†

1. Data on file. Bausch & Lomb Incorporated. Rochester, NY.

ON A MISSION TO SLOW MYOPIA PROGRESSION

Selena Chan, OD, is a -5.00D myope. Her husband has a -12.00D prescription. "He had cataract surgery in his early 40s. And my brother, another high myope, suffered a retinal detachment in a soccer game. Even 20 years ago, we knew the risks associated with high levels of myopia," she says.

So when the couple's daughter started to show signs of progressive myopia, Dr. Chan was determined to learn all she could try to prevent future health risks. "I started taking her outside a lot. She was an avid reader, so that was challenging. But I couldn't stay in denial when she was a -4.25D at age 10," she says.

As an associate doctor in a downtown San Francisco optometry practice, she wasn't seeing too many pediatric patients, but her personal experiences and frustration at being unable to find clear clinical guidance prompted her to try to learn more. "After purchasing Pacific Rims Optometry, I acquired a corneal topographer so that I could start offering orthokeratology treatment," she says.

> *"I tell [patients] what I'm doing for my family, and it spreads like wildfire."*
> *— Dr. Chan*

Her daughter was her test case—and she's happy to report that after 10 years, her daughter's prescription is still -4.25D. She has prescribed myopia management options for nearly a dozen nephews and nieces as well. She's confident in telling other parents that myopia progression can be stopped or slowed down. Showing patients axial length measurements is another objective way to identify success as they experience a slowdown in myopia progression.

She began working with the Paragon CRT® lens 10 years ago, and when it became available, she added MiSight® 1 day contact lenses, specifically designed for myopia control and the first and only FDA-approved* product proven to slow the progression of myopia in children aged 8-12 at the initiation of treatment.[†1] What she loves about MiSight 1 day is that compliance tends to be high. "For any myopia management option to be effective, the patient must be compliant. For many patients, specialty lenses are the option that results in consistent wear. We've been prescribing MiSight 1 day since 2020, and every year, most of my patients see no to little change. The data is powerful."

While Dr. Chan's commitment to managing myopia started with her family, it hasn't stopped there. "Patients ask, 'What should we do about our kids?' So I tell them what I'm doing for my family, and it spreads like wildfire. One happy patient tells three others," she says.

Her practice joined with Treehouse Eyes, accelerating her myopia management referrals and experience. "It grew pretty fast." Her collaboration with CooperVision has also been crucial. "My goal is to manage kids' myopia using whatever treatment modality best fits into the patient's life." She is grateful for having several ways to do so. She also works with patients who end up opting into myopia management eyeglasses from overseas or in Canada.

Best Practices recognition

Her commitment to myopia management and advocacy for children's vision is one reason that Dr. Chan was selected as a CooperVision Best Practices honoree in 2024. "After being in the room with other Best Practices honorees, I wondered why I was chosen. Those practices are so amazing," she says.

But she has come to understand that her practice is amazing, too. "We routinely see 20 myopia management patients a day. It's a lot of work, but it's so rewarding."

Dr. Chan emphasizes the importance of collaboration. "Optometry can be a lonely profession. My two offices have just one exam room each, and I work by myself. CooperVision's idea to bring eye care practitioners together through the Best Practices program to share ideas freely has been invaluable. Just like managing myopia, it was a lonely process. When I didn't know how to prescribe low-dose atropine, I found colleagues who did. Best Practices honorees bounce ideas around, too, not worrying about competition," she says.

The award has also encouraged her to leverage her expertise and ask others to do the same. When one of her associates told her of an interest in vision therapy, Dr. Chan reached out to a premier provider of that service. "Before Best Practices, I would have been afraid to ask," she says. But she found the doctor generous with both her time and expertise.

Dr. Chan wants to be that kind of provider for myopia management. "We have a lot of referrals from other doctors. When we started 20 years ago, there wasn't as much collaboration. Now, they're learning how to start some of the treatments, and they're sending high-risk patients to me." The understanding about myopia—among professionals and among patients—has grown substantially.

Being able to offer personal attention and innovative solutions means that she can help more children. Her daughter may have been her first myopia management patient, but in the years since, Dr. Chan has made it her mission to treat as many as she can. PA

† Indications for use: MiSight® 1 day (omafilcon A) soft (hydrophilic) contact lenses for daily wear are indicated for the correction of myopic ametropia and for slowing the progression of myopia in children with non-diseased eyes, who at the initiation of treatment are 8-12 years of age and have a refraction of -0.75 to -4.00 diopters(spherical equivalent) with ≤ 0.75 diopters of astigmatism. The lens is to be discarded after each removal.

* Only FDA approved soft contact lens designed for myopia control in the U.S.

‡ Compared to a single vision 1 day lens over a 3 year period.

1. Chamberlain P, et al. A 3-year randomized clinical trial of MiSight lenses for myopia control. *Optom Vis Sci.* 2019; 96(8):556-567.

PROVIDING COMFORT AND VISION STABILITY FOR YOUR ASTIGMATIC CONTACT LENS WEARERS

"Patients with astigmatism may face more challenges than their spherical lens counterparts, but with the right lens technology, these challenges can be effectively managed," says **Robert L. Rosenthal, OD**, of EYECARE for You in Newtown, Pennsylvania.

"With the current offerings from contact lens vendors, there's no reason for eye care professionals (ECPs) to try to use spherical lenses to mask low levels of astigmatism," he says. "Indeed, ECPs should be doing all they can to provide patients with the most precise and customized solution possible." For instance, in one recent study, it was noted that low to moderate astigmatic patients who were fit with a toric soft contact lens versus a spherical soft contact lens could read smaller text at a faster rate.[1]

Dr. Rosenthal

Overcoming the comfort challenge

Dr. Rosenthal hears from some of his colleagues that the challenges of providing patients with consistent comfort and stable vision are the primary reasons they avoid toric contact lens correction.[2] Comfort may be influenced by the choices of lens material, lens design and replacement schedule.

For instance, unlike ballasted designs that have a thicker, weighted lower lens for stability which could interact with the lower eyelid, the proprietary BLINK STABILIZED® Design across the ACUVUE® portfolio of toric lenses harnesses the power of the blink[3], resulting in minimal lower lid interaction to help support patient comfort.^[3]

Further, ACUVUE lenses for astigmatism have embedded tear-like wetting agents throughout the entire lens matrix, not just on the surface.[4] The long-chain, high-molecular-weight polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP) is a particularly effective wetting agent, helping to provide exceptional comfort all day long,"[4] he says.

Additionally, ACUVUE manufactures lenses for astigmatism in one-day, two-week and monthly replacement options, offering patients several options to meet their needs.

Ensuring vision stability

With ballasted lenses, the performance generally benefits from the patient being upright, not stretched out on the sofa watching TV, for example. ACUVUE lenses help address this issue with its BLINK STABILIZED Design.[3] Unlike ballasted designs that may be affected by gravity to a greater degree,[3] the ACUVUE lens has four stability zones that work naturally with the eyelids to help keep the lens in the correct position, even with extensive head and eye movements,[3] Dr. Rosenthal says. The result is that patients maintain consistent, stable vision.[3]

Furthermore, Dr. Rosenthal would prefer not to put monocular astigmatic patients, which includes nearly 50% of astigmatic patients,[5] into a prism-ballast lens that introduces vertical prism into the optic zone. Some of these patients could begin to experience discomfort from a vertical prism disparity.[*6,7]

Best fitting practices

Achieving an optimal fit is crucial for toric lenses, as it directly impacts both comfort and vision stability. ACUVUE offers an online fitting calculator for all ACUVUE for astigmatism products here.

- A precise refraction is essential, with vertex correction applied to both the sphere and cylinder components of the prescription. "In my experience, patients with higher minus prescriptions and significant astigmatism (e.g., -3.00 and above), can be fit successfully with a readily available lens," he says.
- Allow the lens to stabilize on the eye for at least five minutes before assessing its orientation. Check rotation after dynamic eye movements, such as having the patient look up and to the side before fixating on a central target. If stability cannot be confirmed, recheck after settling for about 20 minutes.
- Although rotational issues have decreased with technology advances in Dr. Rosenthal's experience, he uses the LARS rule to adjust if necessary. LARS is the acronym for left add, right subtract, and this method helps ensure that the patient receives clear, stable vision.

By paying close attention to lens material, edge design and stabilization methods, Dr. Rosenthal has been able to provide his astigmatic patients with exceptional comfort and stable vision.[3] PA

Dr. Rosenthal serves as a professional affairs consultant for Johnson & Johnson Vision.

^Traditional prism and peri-ballast lens designs have a thicker area below lower eyelid than ACUVUE® Brand Contact Lenses for ASTIGMATISM that can cause interaction and may cause unwanted rotation due to lateral movement of the lower lid during blinks.

*Vertical heterophoria possibly caused by prism dissociation due to the presence of induced optical prism is a relevant factor for practitioners to consider when fitting toric contact lenses for monocular astigmats or those requiring a mix of toric soft contact lens designs e.g., mixed prescriptions.[6,7] Clinical studies have not been done to fully characterize the clinical effects of differences in base down prism among different contact lenses.

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Important Safety Information: ACUVUE® Contact Lenses are indicated for vision correction. As with any contact lens, eye problems, including corneal ulcers, can develop. Some wearers may experience mild irritation, itching or discomfort. Lenses should not be prescribed if patients have any eye infection, or experience eye discomfort, excessive tearing, vision changes, redness or other eye problems. Consult the package insert for complete information. Complete information is also available from Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc. by calling 1-800-843-2020, or by visiting www.jnjvisionpro.com/en-us.

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