

Course Title

“Starting from Scratch”
Building a Specialty Contact Lens Service
Academic Medical vs Private Practice

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Course Length - 1 Hour

Course Description - Presenters provide insight on how to build a specialty contact lens service from ground up in a private practice versus academic medical setting. Both practice modalities present unique challenges and opportunities to grow a specialty contact lens clinic. Attendees will be presented a practical roadmap on clinical decisions and practice management and business logistics irrespective of their modality.

Learning Objectives -

1. Learn tips on how to acquire a knowledge base and skill set to become a specialty contact lens expert, applicable skills independent of practice modality
2. Understand how to deliver quality service, maximize management of schedule and staff utility to provide efficient care and produce a profitable business
3. Understand how to overcome challenges of building a specialty contact lens niche in both a private practice and medical academic setting.
4. Learn effective methods for marketing, patient selection and retention, and fostering community referrals and co-management with other eye care professionals

Course Outline

Introduction - Academic Medical vs. Private Practice

- Introduce speakers experience in respective modality
 - Dr. Avani Dave
 - Started off as an Associate at an established Specialty Contact Lens Practice post residency training in Toronto, Canada
 - Subsequently recruited to University at Buffalo's Ophthalmology Department to establish the Contact Lens Service with no pre-existing program, patient base, referral source, fee schedule, billing team and contact lab network
 - Transitioned role to Director of Optometry service with efforts to recruit more contact lens fitters and establish more specialty

services including myopia management working alongside Pediatric Ophthalmology

- Will discuss the contrast of practising in a Canadian private practice cash model to a US-based Academic Institute partnered with insurance panels serving a variety of patient demographics
- Dr. Ariel Cerenzie:
 - As an associate, grew specialty contact lens and myopia management specialty in an established private practice, increasing revenue by over 300% in 4 years
 - Accepted vision and medical insurance
 - Transitioned to ownership of a specialty contact lens and myopia management practice, starting with no patient base.
 - Self-pay practice with a monthly membership model
 - Will discuss both perspectives of starting from an established patient base compared to cold-starting a private practice.

Introduction - Academic vs. Private Practice

- Market analysis: Trends in special contact lenses

Knowledge Base - How to become a Specialty Contact Lens Fitter?

- Education Recommendations
 - Fitting guides
 - CL Spectrum
 - Review of Cornea and Contact Lens
 - FB pages: Scleral Lens Practitioners, lab-specific FB pages
 - Lab-specific consultants
- Residency Training
- Fellowships
- Virtual or In-Person Lectures
 - Lab-specific webinars
 - GPLI
 - Woo U
 - Eyes on EyeCare
- Workshops
 - Wet labs at conferences
 - Wet labs at office
- Knowledge Enhancement Plan
 - Continuing Education
 - Schedule attendance on a regular basis to relevant conference, meetings, workshops and virtual learning

Contact Lens Labs - Medical/Academic vs. Private Practice

- Establish contact lens lab accounts

- Acquire Diagnostic Fitting Sets
- Establish relationship with regional representative
- Understand access/communication with consultation team
- Schedule one-on-one workshops/training working with new products
- Partnership with multiple labs to offer range of products
- Understanding individual contracts and policies
 - Things to pay attention to:
 - Warranty Exchange Period and Policy
 - Remake costs
 - Shipping Time
 - Cancellation policy
 - Invoice Due Dates
- Spending Bank Balance
- Commercial vs. Custom (Impression Based technology)

Schedule - Medical/Academic vs. Private Practice

- Scheduling Templates and Time Allocation
 - Efficiency tips
- Exam Flow
- New versus Established lens wearers
 - Consultation Visits
- Fitting vs. Follow-Ups

Staff and Training - Medical/Academic vs. Private Practice

- The art of delegation + training
 - Scheduling and Referral Management
 - Dispensing products, patient education and insertion and removal training sessions
 - Diagnostic lens fitting
 - Ordering
 - Inventory Management
 - Patient outreach and triage communication, efficient follow-up care
 - Specific staff roles: medical scribe, contact lens coordinator, technicians
 - Importance of ongoing training

Patient Selection - Medical/Academic vs. Private Practice

- Existing patient base
 - Selection of Patients for Specialty Contact Lenses & Examples/Mini-Case Reports
 - Custom Soft
 - Prosthetic Contacts
 - Myopia Control
 - Soft and Orthokeratology

- Rigid Gas Permeable
 - Scleral Contact Lenses
 - Commercial vs. Custom (Imaging vs. Impression Based)
 - Run EMR reports based on diagnosis codes
- Effective Marketing Strategies to the public
 - Social Media
 - Patient success stories
 - Blog
 - Website Broadcasts
 - Outreach to referral sources
 - SEO
- Referral Strategies
 - Building and maintaining relationships inter- and intra-specialty
 - ODs
 - Pediatricians
 - OMDs
 - Oncologists
 - Rheumatologists
 - Nurses
 - Physician Assistants
 - Office Events
 - Communication
 - Updates on mutual patient care
 - Newsletters on practice, interesting cases, new technology, etc...
 - Thoughtful gift ideas
 - Grand Rounds and Education Series
- Co-Management
 - With other ODs:
 - Comprehensive care
 - Dry eye
 - Myopia Control
 - Other medical eyecare
 - With OMDs:
 - Post cross-linking
 - Post refractive surgery
 - Post corneal surgery
 - Post cataract surgery

Necessary vs Nice-to-Have Technology - Medical/Academic vs. Private Practice

- Finance Options for New Technology
- Return on Investment Calculations
- Budget Proposals
- Cost-Benefit Discussion

- OCT
- Topography and Tomography
- Scleral Profilometry
- Photography and Videography
- Aberrometer

Finances - Medical/Academic vs. Private Practice

Budgeting

- Return on Investments
- Pricing Models

Insurance Billing and Coding

- Cash Model vs. Participating with Insurance Panels (Vision vs. Medical Plans)
- Renegotiation of Contracts
- Prior Authorizations
- Letters of Medical Necessity

Patient Retention - Medical/Academic vs. Private Practice

- Patient feedback
- Ongoing patient clinical support and access to provider
- Importance of follow-up care
- Co-Management with other medical providers including comprehensive care

Conclusion

- Key Takeaway Points & Actionable Steps
 - Develop a Knowledge ongoing enhancement plan
 - Staff training and development
 - Build and maintain relationships with Contact Lens Labs
 - Technology and Equipment Upgrade
 - Serial Practice Assessment and financial reporting