

Practice Profile **Key-Whitman Eye Center**

Excellence Is Encouraged

Key-Whitman has many employees with 20-year careers.

BY DAN D. CHAMBERS, MBA

The Key-Whitman Eye Center was founded nearly 50 years ago by refractive and cataract surgical pioneer Charles Key, MD. Dr. Key built his clinic and reputation through smart business methods, and he was at the forefront of cataract and refractive eye surgery with procedures such as RK. Upon his retirement in 1995, Dr. Key selected Jeffrey Whitman, MD, to succeed him and make the center the preferred eye care provider in the Dallas area. Now 54 years old, Dr. Whitman had wanted to be an eye surgeon ever since he had accompanied his sister to an ophthalmologic appointment as a child. He grew up in Dallas, and at 20, he graduated from the city's Southern Methodist University.

Dr. Whitman focused on improving patients' quality of life by providing excellent primary eye care as well as medical, surgical, and consulting services. His goal for the practice was to build a medical team of ophthalmologists and optometrists who could readily adapt to the evolving health care environment. The team would provide eye care to patients from a broad, designated geographical region through a network of affiliated satellites. Tens of thousands of procedures and more than a dozen years later, Dr. Whitman and his team have met these goals. With three Texas clinics in Dallas, Arlington, and Plano, two fully accredited surgery centers, and a LASIK center, the nearly 120 employees and 10 doctors work to ensure that each patient achieves his or her best outcome while enjoying a positive experience.

LONGEVITY AND TEAMWORK MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Whereas many clinics must contend with high rates of staff turnover, Key-Whitman has many employees who have been with the practice for 20 years or longer. Prospective candidates are carefully selected, fully evaluated, and tested

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on their reasoning skills, among other traits. The staff's adaptability to change is a key to the center's success. In the business office, the call center, and the rest of the clinic, the mantra is: If it isn't working, we've got to find a better way to do it. Frequent forecasting and planning meetings have proven critical to the team's ability to discuss current challenges and discover solutions.

Recently, Key-Whitman has enjoyed remarkably positive growth without having to downsize the practice—an amazing accomplishment during an economic recession.

Maintaining a strong presence in the media during lean times has contributed to the practice's success. The focus has been on branding, which has produced an increase in the practice's market share.

Using a team approach, the clinic rapidly and successfully adopted premium IOLs. New technology is a major component not only of the clinic but also in the administrative office, which uses Internet marketing with Google analytics, billing systems, electronic medical records, and advanced diagnostic testing.

EXCELLENCE IS ENCOURAGED

Dr. Whitman is a past president of the American College of Eye Surgeons and the Dallas Academy of Ophthalmology, and he is currently a clinical correspondent for the AAO. He sits on several scientific advisory committees, participates in FDA studies, and frequently speaks at educational forums.

Recognizing the limitations on his time and his desire to maintain a personal life, Dr. Whitman has selected a team of fellowship-trained ophthalmologists and optometrists to provide care. Each doctor is available to the others as an immediate resource. Furthermore, Key-Whitman encourages continuing education and certification to its ophthalmic and nursing staff, and the practice offers financial rewards for accomplishments. Dr. Whitman is board certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and by the American Board of Eye Surgeons in LASIK and cataract surgery. In fact, every surgeon at Key-Whitman is board certified in cataract surgery, and four surgeons are board certified in LASIK.

Dr. Whitman specializes in premium lens surgery and refractive refinements. After implanting an IOL, he is always willing to take extra steps to achieve the best possible refractive outcomes for his patients. He monitors clinical outcomes and constantly adjusts his techniques to maximize results. Everyone from the personnel answering the phone to the doctors in the practice understands that the entire team has a responsibility to growing the practice through happy patients.

"We must get it right at every step along the way, or we are dropping the ball for the patient and the practice," Dr. Whitman said. ■

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