

— Practice Profile **ClearView Eye and Laser Medical Center** —

# Shared Values Make the Practice Run

Communication in the practice as a whole, and with patients, is at the core of success.

BY SANDY T. FELDMAN, MD



I approach running my practice with the philosophy that it is a business. As such, it incorporates core corporate values, a mission statement, and a vision statement. This structure ensures that everyone in the practice is on the same page regarding the message we want to impart to the public and the community as a whole—including other physicians.

The staff members know what their role is within the system. They help make the practice run with shared values that dictate how we treat each other and our patients as well as what our expectations are for our patients. The health care we deliver in my practice is the care that we like to receive ourselves, and we are very demanding in that respect.

I place an emphasis on teamwork, ensuring that we coordinate between departments, whether it is the front office, back office, surgery, billing, or marketing. Staff members know that they are expected to fulfill their role within the team, which is greater than each individual. People who share these values thrive in my practice's environment.

## HOLISTIC CARE

I am a cornea, cataract, and refractive surgeon. As a reflection of my own healthy lifestyle—and due to the fact that my practice is located in Southern California—I also offer aesthetic treatments and nutraceuticals. More importantly, however, my staff and I assist patients in navigating the maze of health care. We go above and beyond for our patients by making appointments with other specialists, for exam-

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ple, rather than just giving patients a name and a number.

I also have an outstanding relationship with my referring networks. Judgment is one of the most important aspects of being a physician; knowing when not to treat a patient is as important as treating him or her. In modern medicine, a single physician cannot be an expert on everything. I have referred patients to internists, rheumatologists, and infectious disease specialists. In ophthalmology, a patient could be coming in for LASIK, and the



Dr. Feldman, appearing on a local TV news program, discusses new developments in laser vision correction.



ClearView Eye and Laser Medical Center's Web site contains valuable information for prospective patients.

surgeon might suspect thyroid disease. Scenarios like this one happen more frequently than some might think. As ophthalmologists, we need to assess the patient as a whole and be aware of his or her overall health.

Consideration of patients' lifestyle needs determines how I deliver eye care. Today, with many premium IOL options but no one optimal choice, it is imperative that ophthalmologists communicate effectively to properly educate patients. As an implant expert on Internet groups, I often receive questions from unhappy patients. Their disappointment with their visual results is often due to a lack of understanding of what was explained to them by their physicians. I therefore strive to improve communication in my practice between team members and with patients.

### TOOLS FOR PATIENTS' EDUCATION

Many tools are available for educating patients. In my practice, we use the Dell Questionnaire, handouts, videos, news stories, and the Internet. The largest growing market for Facebook is users who are 65 and older. It is crucial that we use all of the resources available to us to educate our patients so that they can make the right decisions for themselves.

My staff and I are also on the leading edge of new developments. In fact, it is a part of our mission to be involved in clinical trials of technology that we think will benefit patients.

I started the practice in 1997. The one-story, 6,000-square-foot facility is located in the biotechnology area of San Diego. The unique design is between that of a spa and that of a lounge—not the norm in the medical industry. In addition to small touches such as a cappuccino maker and current magazines, my practice has floor-

### FAST FACTS: SANDY T. FELDMAN AND CLEARVIEW EYE AND LASER MEDICAL CENTER

#### Undergraduate:

Northwestern University, Chicago

#### Graduate:

Rush University, Chicago

#### Fellowship:

University of California, San Diego

#### How did you start your practice?

I was originally in biomedical engineering and was fascinated by the concept of getting rid of glasses and seeing naturally. I did a cornea/refractive fellowship and was in academic medicine for 9 years. I was a physician scientist, had a National Eye Institute grant, and taught residents and fellows at University of California, San Diego. I was involved in basic and clinical research, but when refractive surgery came about and the excimer lasers were FDA approved, I made up my mind to go into private practice.

#### Take-home messages:

"Success is a choice." —Rick Pitino. "The best way to predict your future is to create it!" —Peter F. Drucker

to-ceiling windows and built-in seating where family and friends may observe surgery. There is a conference room where we conduct educational programs for the community and other physicians.

### VISION

I believe that whatever an individual surgeon's vision is for his or her practice, it can be realized. For ophthalmologists and others in the eye care industry, I think it is important to build the proper environment to express that vision. All of us should focus on what we do best; there is always a niche. We should not devalue what we do, and we should not compete on price. Rather, we should understand the economic realities of today and work to grow the entire category.

We should always remember to be collegial, because even the best surgeons experience complications. We must do what is best for the patient and the profession as a whole. Finally, we should never lose focus on delivering great eye care to patients. ■

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