

THE ALCON ACTIVATE™ PROGRAM: Helping Practices Elevate Patient Education and Effectively Integrate Advanced Technology Lenses

Since its launch in 2019, ACTIVATE™ (Alcon) has been adopted by leading practices in the United States. Three surgeons and one practice manager from three practices that have been enrolled in ACTIVATE™ since the program began were interviewed to discuss their experience.

	PRACTICE	YEAR OF ENROLLMENT IN ACTIVATE™	PRACTICE SIZE	NUMBER OF YEARS IN PRACTICE (SURGEON)	NUMBER OF YEARS IMPLANTING AT-IOLS (SURGEON)	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PATIENTS IMPLANTED WITH AT-IOLS PER MONTH (PRACTICE)
	Ismail Shalaby, MD, PhD Levin Eye Care; Towson, Maryland	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 offices • 3 ophthalmologists • 12 optometrists 	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 (Toric) • 6 (EDOF and multifocals) 	32
	Matthew T. Clary, MD The Eye Center; Columbia, South Carolina	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 office • 4 ophthalmologists • 1 optometrist 	13.5	13.5	113
	Rory A. Myer, MD Tomoka Eye Associates; Ormond Beach, Port Orange, and Palm Coast, Florida	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 offices • 6 ophthalmologists • 2 optometrists 	8.5	8.5	125
	Bill Watson, CEO					

Abbreviations: AT-IOL: Advanced technology intraocular lens; CEO: Chief Executive Officer; EDOF: Extended depth-of-focus; MD: Doctor of Medicine; PhD: Doctor of Philosophy.

ACTIVATE™ is a comprehensive and customizable practice optimization program focused on Alcon's advanced technology IOLs (AT-IOLs) that equips the practice with expert clinical knowledge and patient education resources through close partnership with Alcon's Cataract Refractive Manager (CRM) team. ACTIVATE™ provides an extensive library of videos and print resources, including dialogue tools and testimonials, to support both patient and practice staff education. Practices are supported through every step of the cataract treatment pathway: from treatment selection—including setting patient expectations—to planning for and performing surgery, and through post-operative maintenance. ACTIVATE™ equips practices with the resources needed to increase clinical expertise and performance, effectively integrate and offer AT-IOLs, and optimize patient education and outcomes.

PRIOR TO JOINING ACTIVATE™, PRACTICES FACED CHALLENGES WITH PATIENT EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION OF AT-IOLs INTO THEIR EXISTING WORKFLOWS.

Question: What were common challenges encountered with patient education or awareness of advanced cataract technologies, including AT-IOLs?

Answers:

Ismail Shalaby, MD, PhD: There were not a lot of patient education materials available prior to ACTIVATE™. In addition, patients were aware of the negative consequences with older multifocal lenses, and there were challenges with explaining that the technology and outcomes have greatly improved.

Matthew T. Clary, MD: Patients felt

RESOURCES PROVIDED BY ACTIVATE™ INCLUDE:

- Patient education materials (eg, brochures, videos, vision simulator)
- Staff training materials
- Practice marketing materials
- Templates (eg, questionnaires, discussion guides)

confused and overwhelmed with the many different options for cataract surgery. We needed to figure out an effective and efficient way to communicate options to patients, so that surgeons did not get behind and patients did not get frustrated. Patients would be unhappy when there were post-operative surprises, or if they became aware of options that they did not recall were discussed.

Rory A. Myer, MD / Bill Watson, CEO: There were challenges with aligning all staff on consistent messaging to patients on the different lenses available and who was eligible.

Question: What were common challenges encountered with integrating AT-IOLs into the existing cataract surgery workflow?

Answers:

Dr. Shalaby: Without staff trained to have discussions with patients on IOL options, the surgeon must spend chair time discussing the advantages and limitations of each lens implant.

Dr. Clary: When first integrating AT-IOLs into the workflow, finding how to explain the options and set patient expectations effectively and efficiently was challenging.

Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: Having everyone on the same page was a challenge. Integrating AT-IOLs into the workflow is a team approach that works best when patient, staff, and manager education are structured.

ACTIVATE™ OFFERS NUMEROUS BENEFITS FOR PRACTICES, INCLUDING IMPROVED PATIENT EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE, OPTIMIZED WORKFLOW, AND INCREASED AT-IOL UTILIZATION.

Question: How did enrollment in ACTIVATE™ impact patient education and awareness of AT-IOLs?

Answers:

Dr. Shalaby: The referring optometrist, technicians, and a lens counselor who have been trained through ACTIVATE™ help to educate patients on cataract surgery and AT-IOL options before they meet with me. The lens counsellor has also been trained to discuss costs and payment options with patients. After they leave the office, patients feel capable of making an informed decision, and typically do not have many follow-up questions.

Dr. Clary: With ACTIVATE™, there is a team approach to patient education. Patients are provided with a folder at check-in that outlines our basic and advanced cataract surgery options (ie, AT-IOLs, FLACS [femtosecond laser-assisted cataract surgery]) and their associated costs. Patients learn about cataract surgery and their lens options from referring doctors and technicians prior to meeting with me. ACTIVATE™ provides a variety of tools (eg, brochures, videos, vision simulator) to communicate with patients in a streamlined, efficient manner.

Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: ACTIVATE™

provides a variety of educational materials. Giving patients something tangible to hold and look at (like a brochure) is a game changer. The vision simulator is powerful, as it is difficult to describe postoperative vision to patients. In addition, videos are great for visual learners. ACTIVATE™ has also helped staff navigate discussions with patients around financials. Patients are empowered to make their own decisions and feel confident in their lens choice.

Question: How would you describe patients' satisfaction with their overall cataract surgery experience after enrollment in ACTIVATE™?

Answers:

Dr. Shalaby: Patients love that our staff can provide thorough explanations on cataract surgery and the lenses available to them. Our practice receives great feedback on our personable patient-clinician interactions.

Dr. Clary: I have had fewer patients expressing frustration with their vision at extra postoperative visits because we are able to set appropriate expectations beforehand. Rather, greater patient understanding of cataract technologies and informed decision-making has led to more patients celebrating their postoperative vision.

Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: ACTIVATE™ streamlined the technical aspects of patient education, contributing to continued high patient satisfaction. We have received many compliments from patients such as 'this is a well-oiled machine,' and it is 'clear that you do this regularly.' We have seen a lot of word-of-mouth referrals, which is a good indicator of how happy patients are.

Question: How has enrollment in ACTIVATE™ impacted the integration of AT-IOLs into the cataract surgery workflow?

Answers:

Dr. Shalaby: The workflow is smoother and faster; the exam and surgeon discussions can now be done on one day instead of two, facilitated by the streamlined yet informative patient education material from ACTIVATE™. Because patients learn a lot through the technicians and the lens counselor, I can use my time to discuss the patient's eye, recommendations based on medical assessment and patient lifestyle, and the risks and benefits of cataract surgery itself.

Dr. Clary: Due to enhanced patient education, patients are able to make their lens choice quicker, resulting in less chair time. Many decide which package they will choose prior to their conversation with me. They feel more confident in their decision because they better understand the technology.

Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: The training provided through ACTIVATE™ has ensured that the entire team works as a unit and delivers consistent messaging. The enhanced staff and patient education have decreased physician involvement in educating patients. We implement a questionnaire to determine what patient priorities are, and, based on patient lifestyle, the staff help to guide patients to choose the best IOL for them. Patients often know which IOL they want before they reach the surgeon, decreasing chair time.

Question: Has ACTIVATE™ implementation helped your practice in increasing AT-IOL utilization?

Answers:

Dr. Shalaby: Definitely, the proportion of eligible patients choosing an AT-IOL in our practice has increased from 25-30% to 60-70% because of overall marketing and how lenses are discussed. This growth has primarily been in extended depth-of-focus and multifocal IOLs.

Dr. Clary: Before enrollment in ACTIVATE™, about 25-30% of eligible patients were choosing AT-IOLs or LenSx® (Alcon). This proportion has grown further by 10-15% for me overall, because of a combination of ACTIVATE™ and the improved technology of the current AT-IOLs.

Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: Absolutely, the proportion of patients choosing an upgraded cataract surgery (ie, AT-IOLs, FLACS) at our practice increased from 35-45% to 50-60%. In 2021, Dr. Myer's conversion rate was 61%, with 36% of patients choosing an AT-IOL and 25% choosing FLACS with a monofocal IOL. The Alcon CRM's presence and interactions with our staff are key. After she visits Tomoka Eye, we see an increase in FLACS and AT-IOL utilization over the following couple of months.

Question: Has ACTIVATE™ impacted any other key practice metrics?

Answers:

Dr. Shalaby: The procedure volume, revenue, and number of referrals have increased. I believe we are receiving more outside referrals because of highly satisfied patients sharing their positive experience.



Dr. Shalaby: ACTIVATE™ has taken Levin Eye Care to a whole new level.

Dr. Clary: The program has increased revenue due to increased AT-IOL utilization. The number of patients referred to the practice for AT-IOL implantation by former patients has also increased.

Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: Revenue has increased with more patients choosing AT-IOLs and FLACS.

ACTIVATE™ FACILITATES HIGH PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH AT-IOLS.

Question: How would you describe patients' overall satisfaction with AT-IOL implantation after enrollment in ACTIVATE™?

Answers:

Dr. Shalaby: Patients with AT-IOLs are more satisfied after enrollment in ACTIVATE™, which has enhanced patient education and helped in setting appropriate expectations for potential outcomes and side effects. In our practice, more than 85% of patients are highly satisfied after PanOptix® or Vivity™ implantation (both Alcon).

Dr. Clary: Patient satisfaction has increased because ACTIVATE™ helps the practice properly screen patients and set appropriate expectations. Patients are tremendously satisfied with their level of spectacle independence and vision in low light conditions with PanOptix® or Vivity™.

Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: Overall patient satisfaction is excellent, and this is due to the educational materials that ACTIVATE™ provides. These materials set appropriate expectations prior to surgery.

In 2019, a survey of pre-surgery cataract patients showed that 90% of patients wanted to know about all available options for cataract surgery, but just 24% felt knowledgeable about cataract lenses

WHY ENROLL IN ACTIVATE™?



Dr. Shalaby: ACTIVATE™ helps me offer patients the best technology available. The program has helped with time management, making patient discussions smoother, easier, and more motivating. The CRM helps to educate new staff into the ACTIVATE™/Levin Eye Care way.



Dr. Clary: ACTIVATE™ gives The Eye Center the opportunity to offer the latest IOL technologies. It reduces wait times and patient frustration. Training sessions by the CRM help staff to speak to patients confidently and knowledgeably, which

helps the cataract surgery workflow. There are happier patients, happier staff, and happier surgeons.



Dr. Myer / Mr. Watson: ACTIVATE™ provides thorough and extensive technical and clinical training for our staff, which gives them the confidence and the tools for

better patient education and customer service. With good patient selection and counselling, patients who get AT-IOLs are happy. The Alcon team also supports us with anything we need.

and surgery options.^{*1} ACTIVATE™ was created to help address this gap in patient education.

Dr. Shalaby, Dr. Clary, Dr. Myer, and Mr. Watson agree that ACTIVATE™ helps provide a streamlined process for educating patients on their AT-IOL options and other advanced technologies. ACTIVATE™ provides staff with the confidence and tools they need to facilitate effective and streamlined discussions with patients, empowering patients with knowledge to make an informed decision, sometimes prior to meeting with the surgeon. Practices that have enrolled in ACTIVATE™

have seen a high level of success with AT-IOL integration into their cataract surgery workflow and have observed growth in AT-IOL utilization, patient satisfaction, and referrals. ■

Abbreviations: AT-IOL: Advanced technology intraocular lens; CRM: Cataract Refractive Manager; FLACS: Femtosecond laser-assisted cataract surgery; IOL: Intraocular lens.

*In a survey of pre-surgery (n=300) cataract patients, age>60. Assumes patients have all information on lens options (4 lens types), costs, and benefits. Provides consumer preferences outside of ophthalmologist consultation or recommendation. Assumes the lens will deliver up to the expectation outlined in the task (i.e. stated side effects and benefits are "real world" experiences).

1. Alcon. (2018) Cataract Patient Trade-off Research.