KEYS TO BUILDING YOUR REFERRAL NETWORK

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Course Objectives

1. Define the “network” and role of co-management
2. What is your goal?
3. Refer or not to refer?
4. Research
5. Preparation
6. Presentation and Tactics
7. Follow-up

Co-Management

In a survey by Ophthalmology Management of over 200 ophthalmologists they found that in practices that have not integrated with an optometrist, 31.6% of ophthalmologists co-manage their cataract patients.

This trend is on the rise due to an aging patient population and the inability of ophthalmologists to meet the demand for vision services.
What is your goal?

- Geographic?
- A specific percentage of market penetration?
- Who is NOT a target?

Why refer to you?

Doctors refer to the practice that they perceive is their best alternative, all things considered…

They get into a habit, and only rarely review their choices.

To encourage change in their referral habits, we have to do something different that causes them to review their choices.

Reasons Not to Refer to You

- Negative patient comments.
- Negative interactions between offices.
- Negative interactions between doctors.
- Poor communications between offices/doctors.
- Lost patients.
- No knowledge of your office, services, etc.
So... how do you develop your network?

Research
Preparation
Presentation & Tactics
Follow-up

Who currently refers to us?
What is our target market?
What do our patients say about us?

Google Maps
Patient Satisfaction Surveys
You should make sure that ALL tactics you employ to encourage OD referrals are approved by your healthcare attorney!

Internal Process
- Confirm practice co-management pricing and clinical process.
- Ensure forms are properly updated and prepared for distribution.
- Identify support tools, patient education and marketing material.
- Make sure your PMS can track how a patient was referred.
- Train staff on the importance of coordinated care.
- Emphasize the importance of returning referred patients.
- Prepare a co-management guidelines binder.
  - Treatment forms.
  - Indications for surgery
  - Patient and post-op instructions.

External Process
- Segment your target population.
- Develop methods for tracking leads and network activity.
- Survey your top referring Optometrists.
- Review findings and fine tune your selling points.
- Have a “travel kit” which is a box of support materials to demonstrate.
Presentation and Tactics

- Continuing Education Programs
- Surgeon to OD communication
- Website for Optometrists
- OD staff lunch and learn
- Generic and branded patient education
- Cooperative newsletters
- Staff/OD day at the practice
- Practice management tools and education
- Testimonial binder/patient surveys
- Optometric “Grand Rounds”
- Good-will Ambassador

Follow-up
Follow-up

How can we continue to build relationships and encourage referrals?

- eNewsletter for referring optometrists
- Personal phone calls
- Referrer Handouts
- Referral forms
- Socialize
- Show appreciation

Remember…

“When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion.”

— Dale Carnegie

THANK YOU!

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