

12/01/2020

OBM and EyeChat Joint Meeting with Dr. Carol Alexander

Hey, it's your favorite notetaker again, Brian. Remember how excited you were when the Avengers first assembled? Tonight's kind of like that. Captain OBM and Super EyeChat are teaming up to bring you a smash hit meeting featuring the amazing Dr. Carol Alexander!

6:05-

EyeChat board intros and Updates; OBM board intros and updates

6:10 -

Thank you Johnson & Johnson for sponsoring us!

Introductions from Ryka Lovis our facilitator and Dr. Alexander, our speaker for tonight!

Dr. Carol Alexander is the Head of North America Professional Relations for Johnson & Johnson Vision, she is responsible for organizational sponsorships and academic strategy for JJV. She brings a rich history of leadership in organized optometry to her role along with years of clinical experience in private practice. She's been officially recognized for many awards, ranging from the AOSA's Young Optometrist of the Year, Ohio's Optometrist of the Year, and Most Influential Women in the Optical Industry by "Vision Monday". Dr. Alexander not only serves as a spokesperson for Johnson & Johnson Vision, but through her continued work in advocacy promotes a strong doctor-patient relationship to support eye health and vision safety.

Dr. Alexander first talks about what J&J means to her and what they stand for, which are: regular, comprehensive eye exams, honoring the prescription as written, and a high and consistent standard of care keeping the patient-doctor relationship at the center. J&J are also an advocacy partner for optometry.

Let's briefly talk about advocacy:

- Dr. Alexander advocates in not just one state, but many states
- As you've probably already heard many times, optometry is a legislative profession
- Note that legislative action takes a long time (a good example would be the contact lens rule)
- You may also want to be aware of the current FTC contact lens rule update for prescribers. Doctors must provide patients with their contact lens prescription (either through a hard copy or a digital copy).

6:30 -

It's time to jump into some questions regarding practice management!

For those concerned about the future of private practice, here's a great quote from Dr. Alexander: "There's always room for someone who's good at what they do."

It is true that there is a saturation of optometrists in major metropolitan areas. However, this is very dependent on location. If you are interested in opening your own practice, perhaps consider locations outside of these saturated areas.

That being said, it is not impossible if you still want to open in a big city. Also, be sure to take into account your financial situation before opening your own practice.

If you could do everything again, how would you start your practice this time around?

- She would be sure to buy into an existing practice. However, this practice would have to be a great one.
- One major benefit of an existing practice is that there is already a pre-existing patient base as well as available equipment.
- Starting a practice cold could be very hard financially. Buying an existing practice could be a good solution to this problem.

Opinion on 1-800-Contacts Online Eye Exams?

- She doesn't even consider them to be an "online eye exam." Rather, it is an online refraction that they promote.
- For a great patient experience, you cannot separate the refraction portion from the comprehensive eye exam. It is the comprehensive eye examination as a whole that is truly valuable to the patients.

Should we be wary of opticians pushing for refraction privileges?

- She has testified against this! Since optometrists have been pushing to expand their scope of practice, it's no surprise that opticians are doing so as well.. However, something to consider is: do opticians have the education and training to do refractions? She does not see this issue as being a big threat.

Where do you see the contact lens (CL) field moving in the next 10 years?

- CLs are foundational to the success of optometric practices. During the pandemic, some practices have only made revenue through CL sales.
- There is an increase in demand for CLs.
- Doctors need to be more proactive about inquiring their patients about CLs.
- There are exciting innovations that are coming to CLs! CLs are starting to evolve beyond just vision correction.

What is the future of private practice?

- She used to ask herself: "If the sales of glasses and CL lenses were to go away, what would happen?"
- Your business is in serving, not selling! There's always going to be people, they're going to need eye care, and that's where you come in!
- Prioritize taking care of your patients' eyes and you will find your niche.

What to look out for when buying a practice?

- Get the practice evaluated and don't just rely on the information given by the seller.
- Don't just trust the seller! Make sure you feel comfortable about everything.
- Some questions to consider: What kind of systems do they have in place? Are they a modern office? Does the doctor do everything, or do they have help?
- Dr. Alexander prefers a modern style office where the doctor gets help from staff.
- Other important factors: income potential, location, demographics
- It's okay to change your mind and it's okay to make mistakes, but learn from your experiences!
- Look for help and advice from fellow optometrists!

Any parting advice?

- She remembers being where we are today. She is so proud of the career she has built and looks fondly back on it. Yes, times can get hard, but have fun with the journey! Your job doesn't define you, but your passion and love behind it does.

7:10: Raffle Time!

Grand Prize Matcha Tea Set goes to... Aysha Shafi! Congrats!

And some OBM reminders...

Next Meeting with VSP is on January 14th: "Networking with ODs"

Don't forget to participate in our Wills Eye Manual Raffle!

Happy Holidays!

-Brian and OBM