

The Newsletter of  
Primary Eyecare Network

# *focal point*

July - September 2011



*Details  
Inside*

## PIO 2011

PRESERVING INDEPENDENT OPTOMETRY

# **TOTAL PRACTICE SUCCESS A SYMPOSIUM FOR A WORLD CLASS STAFF**

An MBA™ Program sponsored by CIBA Vision & Essilor Laboratories

## PIO 2011: Total Practice Success A Symposium for Building a World Class Staff

Building a first-class staff begins by laying the proper foundation. But even the best groundwork will not produce success without the right people and appropriate training. PIO 2011 brings together all the aspects needed for creating an unparalleled team...including total practice training for the entire staff during Saturday's session.

### Friday's Program for Doctors & Office Leaders

- Staffing Challenges & Opportunities
- Staff Hiring Guidelines, Compensation
- Staff Orientation & Training

### Saturday's Program for the Entire Staff

- Total Practice Sales Workshop for Doctors & Staff
- Total Practice Mission

At PIO 2011 you will get strategies for success, advice from nationally renowned experts, and camaraderie with your colleagues. Best of all, you will leave with the tools you need to build a world-class staff!



Harbor Beach Marriott Resort & Spa, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

September 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>, 2011

The Claremont Resort & Spa, Berkeley, CA

October 28<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

For more information to register visit

[www.PrimaryEye.net/PIO](http://www.PrimaryEye.net/PIO) or call 800-444-9230.

Register for free by using your Marchon Co-op Dollars  
Special Room Rates Available for Attendees

PIO 2011 is an MBA Program: The Management & Business Academy (MBA™) for Eye Care Professionals, sponsored by CIBA VISION and Essilor and endorsed by the AOA, is a professional education program designed to impart advanced business strategies and techniques that help optometrists to improve performance in their practices.

## Why Aren't You In Jail?

By Robert Bell, President, EyeCoach



An optometrist I once met gave me his opinion on "selling". His view was that "selling" cheapens and degrades the profession of optometry. Optometrists and their staff should not be salespeople.

Optometrists should be the best doctors they can be and their staff should be a reflection of that.

I agree with his last statement: Optometrists *should* be the best doctors they can be and their staff *should* reflect that. Absolutely! Unequivocally!

He went on to say that people like me, who teach selling to eye care professionals, should be *ashamed* of themselves; that we appeal to the lowest common denominator of money-grubbing optometrists. It's not the first time I've heard this from someone who has never attended one of my workshops.

I asked, "Doctor, are you telling me that you're dedicated to the health and comfort of your patient's visual health? 100%?"

"Yes, of course," he replied.

"Wonderful! Would you happen to know the percentage of your patients that purchase more than one pair of eyewear from you?"

"Maybe 5 or 10%, if I had to guess."

"How many pairs does your average patient need?"

"On average? Three pairs."

"So, your patients are leaving with less than they *need*?"

With tongue-in-cheek, "So, why aren't you in jail?"

I shared with this doctor the following information: A woman won a \$2.1 million settlement against her cardiologist for failing to give her an aspirin. Yep, an aspirin! Because the patient received *less than*

*what was needed*, she developed gangrene and lost a foot.

If you put your trust into the hands of any kind of physician, a cardiologist, an oncologist, an orthopedist, etc., and they gave you less than what you needed, at the very least, isn't that grounds for a lawsuit?

80% of patients in this country leave their ECP's office with just one pair of glasses. Yet, every time I ask ECPs how many pairs of eyewear their average patients *need*, I never hear "*just one*."

Is it OK for anyone, in any health care field, to give their patients less than what they need? Just how do we get away with this? More importantly, why would we want to get away with this? What's the benefit to the doctor? To the patient? Shouldn't we have a higher standard?

I shared with my new optometric acquaintance that I don't teach ECPs "selling" the way most people understand that term. Rather, I teach ECPs a very simple methodology of asking precise, gentle questions, at specific times. These questions help patients recognize how their visual challenges affect their daily lives, at work, at home, at play, indoors, and outdoors. At this point, patients tend to ask for solutions to these challenges. As a by-product, multiple pair sales just happen to increase!

Robert Bell will be presenting a "Total Practice Sales Workshop for Doctors & Staff," an unconventional, multi-media workshop, on Day 2 of PEN's PIO 2011 events in Fort Lauderdale, FL and Berkeley, CA this fall. We invite you and your staff to come hear and challenge his ideas of, as he puts it, "keeping you from going to the hoosegow."



See a clip of Robert Bell's  
"Selling" Ideas at  
[www.YouTube.com/PrimaryEyeTube](http://www.YouTube.com/PrimaryEyeTube)

## A Happy Employee Equals a Happy Patient

By Mary E. Schmidt, PEN Instructor, President of EyeSystems Consulting

Nearly half of all employees think about quitting. If you don't care if your employees leave, think again. There is a strong correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Studies show that employees deliver the best service when they are happy in their jobs.



**Mary Schmidt**  
PEN Instructor,  
President of  
EyeSystems  
Consulting

Think about the last time you had a positive encounter with a service provider? Can you remember a great encounter at the grocery store, restaurant or possibly the coffee shop? Is it easier to remember more negative customer services experiences than positives? Would your patients lump their experiences in your office in the positive or negative category?

The Gallup Organization has three categories for employees:

**Engaged employees** work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward.

**Non-engaged employees** are checked out. They sleepwalk through the day and put in their time but approach work with a lack of energy and passion.

**Actively disengaged employees** aren't just unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their unhappiness. Each day these workers undermine what engaged co-workers accomplish.

According to the August 2009 Gallup Employee Index, only 33 percent of employees are engaged in their jobs, and 18 percent are disengaged! Which of your staff members fall into what category?

I've worked with many paraoptometric around the United States and I can tell you all three categories exist in just about every practice. There are more non-engaged and far too many actively-disengaged employees than you'd

probably like to think. What can you do to create an engaged employee?

First, you have to take a good, hard look at your staff. Do they meet your expectations? Are you keeping them out of fatigue, fear of change or just plain laziness? Would you rehire each member? How do you invest in them? Motivate them? Support them?

Once you've decided who you really want to invest in, take stock of their strengths and weaknesses then partner with your office manager to develop a plan to develop, grow and energize each one. This is an ongoing process and should be the primary function of the office manager.

The role of the office manager is not just to put out fires and deal with problem issues. Their job is to maximize the potential in every staff member and focus on getting the most out of him or her. Can your manager perform that task? If not, consider starting there. Seek development for the manager through off-site training, one-on-one consultation and ongoing education. If your manager has stopped growing, so will your practice. It's hard to be a manager – give yours all the support he or she needs.

The role of the doctor is to be the positive motivator in the practice. Treat your staff the way you treat a patient when you walk into the exam room. Make a positive observation, ask them a question and look for a connection. Avoid being the disciplinarian. A month of positives can be negated with one thoughtless comment. Let your office manager deal with the day-to-day issues and you stay focused on building positive rapport.

Here is a "must-do" list for keeping staff engaged:

1. Get rid of the disengaged employee quickly. If bad behavior is unacceptable to the practice, it won't continue. A quote to live by: "If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm." -Vince Lombardi

(Continue on next page 6)

## Upcoming Classes

### Doctor Seminars

#### JULY

<b>Webinar</b>	<b>Wed, July 20<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Expanding Your Practice in 2011</b>	
<i>Demystifying Modifiers &amp; Diagnostic Treatments</i>	
Aaron Lech, O.D.	5:30 - 6:30pm PST

#### AUGUST

<b>Webinar</b>	<b>Thurs, August 25<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Expanding Your Practice in 2011</b>	
<i>Integrating the Medical Model Into Your Practice</i>	
Aaron Lech, O.D.	5:30 - 6:30pm PST

#### SEPTEMBER

<b>Livermore, CA</b>	<b>Sat, September 10<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Digital Diaries</b>	8:00 - 2:00pm
Larry Alexander OD, FAAO	

### Staff Seminars

#### JULY

<b>Pleasanton, CA</b>	<b>July 18<sup>th</sup> - July 19<sup>th</sup> - Day 1</b>	9:00 - 5:00pm
<b>CPO Workshop</b>	<b>Day-2</b>	9:00 - Noon
Jill Luebbert, CPOT, ABOC		

<b>Webinar</b>	<b>Tues, July 19<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Troubleshooting in the Dispensary</b>	
Mary E. Schmidt	12:30 - 1:30pm

<b>Irvine, CA</b>	<b>Thurs, July 28<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Frame Adjusting (AM)</b>	9:00am - Noon
<b>Frame Styling (PM)</b>	1:15 - 4:15pm
Mary E. Schmidt	

#### AUGUST

<b>Fremont, CA</b>	<b>Wed, August 10<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Frame Adjusting (AM)</b>	9:00 - Noon
<b>Frame Styling (PM)</b>	1:15 - 4:15pm
Mary E. Schmidt	

<b>Webinar</b>	<b>Fri, August 19<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Pre-Testing</b>	
Jill Luebbert, CPOT, ABOC	12:30 - 1:30pm PST

<b>Walnut Creek, CA</b>	<b>Sun, August 28<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Insurance Billing Basics</b>	
<i>Cigna &amp; Healthnet</i>	
Lori Lobato, CBCS	9:00am - Noon

#### SEPTEMBER

<b>Sacramento, CA</b>	<b>Thurs, September 8<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Lens Design (AM)</b>	9:00 - Noon
<b>Progressive &amp; Computer Lenses (PM)</b>	1:15 - 4:15pm
Mary E. Schmidt	

<b>Webinar</b>	<b>Fri, September 9<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Visual Fields</b>	
Jill Luebbert, CPOT, ABOC	12:30 - 1:30pm PST

<b>San Ramon, CA</b>	<b>Tues, September 27<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Frame Adjusting (AM)</b>	9:00 - Noon
<b>Frame Styling (PM)</b>	1:15 - 4:15pm
Mary E. Schmidt	

## Why Become Certified?

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), "Modern optometry demands that paraoptometrics accept a key role in the practice, and must receive continuing education and training in order to fill this role." The AOA Paraoptometric Certification Program was created to provide a formal declaration of education and skill achievement in the field of paraoptometry.

By becoming a certified paraoptometric, you obtain the skills to become a part of the clinical team and the opportunity to improve your job satisfaction and your working relationships with your doctor, your peers, and the patients you serve.



**Jill Luebbert, CPOT, ABOC** is teaching an upcoming certification training for PEN. She says, "As the scope of optometry continues to expand, the need for certified paraoptometrics is growing. Paraoptometric certification is an opportunity for each of us to expand our knowledge and skill base and prove to our employing doctors and patients that we have the qualifications necessary to perform our duties. Maybe even more importantly, it is our opportunity to move from 'a job in an optometric office' to a career as an allied healthcare professional."



The Certified Paraoptometric Examinations are prepared and administered by the AOA, Commission on Paraoptometric Certification. Certification levels are as follows:

**Certified Paraoptometric (CPO):** proficiency in basic science, clinical principles & procedures, ophthalmic optics & dispensing, and professional issues.

**Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA):** proficiency in office operations, ophthalmic optics and dispensing, testing & procedures, special procedures, refractive status of the eye and binocularity, and basic ocular anatomy & physiology.

**Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT):** proficiency in pre-testing procedures, clinical procedures, ophthalmic optics & dispensing, refractive status of the eye and binocularity, anatomy & physiology, and practice management.

### Thinking about Certification?

PEN is offering a two-day program to help paraoptometrics prepare of the first level of certification:

**CPO Workshop with Jill Luebbert, CPOT, ABOC**

Hilton Pleasanton, Pleasanton, CA

July 18<sup>th</sup> - July 19<sup>th</sup>

Day 1, 9am-5pm

Day 2, 9am -Noon

\$150 (Non-Members \$180)

[Click Here to register](#)

Register online at [www.PrimaryEye.net/education](http://www.PrimaryEye.net/education) or call 800-444-9230.

For information about certification, please visit [www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org), choose "Paraoptometrics" from the tool bar at the top of the page, and then click "Certification" on the left-hand tool bar.

## Lecture Notes Available for Insurance Billing Basics Series

If you were unable to attend one of the first two lectures in the five-part series, *Insurance Billing Basics* presented by Lori Lobato, CBCS, the lecture notes are still available! Lecture notes for *Medicare 101* and *The Blues: Blue Cross & Blue Shield* may be ordered for \$40 each by calling PEN at 800-444-9230.

There are three more presentations left in the Insurance Billing Basics series, which is an introductory insurance training to help

reduce mistakes that can result in decreased productivity and revenue. Classes are held on Sundays in Walnut Creek.

August 28<sup>th</sup> ..... Cigna & Healthnet

October 2<sup>nd</sup> ..... United Healthcare & Pacificare

December 11<sup>th</sup> ..... Aetna

Register online at [www.PrimaryEye.net/education](http://www.PrimaryEye.net/education) or by calling 800-444-9230.

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**Save 50% on PEN Education by using your ClearVision Co-op Dollars!**

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## New Vendor



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## New Vendor



## Kimco MediQuest Staffing

Kimco MediQuest Staffing is the premier connection between high-quality, healthcare professionals and essential healthcare positions...staffing solutions you can rely on!

Kimco MediQuest offers temporary, temp-to-hire, and direct hire placement as well as payroll services. Concentrating exclusively on the medical field for over 40 years has given them the focus and experience necessary to keep up with the needs of the constantly evolving healthcare industry.

Thorough screening, testing, and reference checking enables Kimco MediQuest to make the right match for their clients. Plus, their associates are fully insured, including professional liability and workers' compensation coverage. Kimco MediQuest stands by its work and offers a performance guarantee to ensure complete satisfaction with their services.

Kimco MediQuest offers a broad mix of staffing solutions that you can use individually or together as part of a comprehensive staffing program. Their goal is to help you achieve maximum productivity while reducing costs and the administrative challenges associated with hiring. They will analyze your needs and recommend the most effective staffing strategies to meet those needs.



## Exclusively for PEN Members:

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Rosie Picasso  
925-945-1444  
[rpicasso@kimco.com](mailto:rpicasso@kimco.com)

## NANOFILM

### Why Care About Lens Care?

**Do your patients understand the value of lens care? It starts with your staff.** Nanofilm, the leading maker of professional lens care products, was recently awarded a grant to fund a continuing education course for professional opticians, "Why Care About Lens Care." The American Board of Opticianry approves this no-cost online course for one hour of Continuing Education credit. The course, which is hosted on the website of 20/20 Magazine, was designed to help eyecare professionals understand the material science behind cleaning optical lenses and coatings and learn effective ways to discuss the topic with patients.

"Progressive eyecare professionals know the importance of proper lens care for their patients and their business. This

ABO-certified continuing education course gives them additional knowledge to help them succeed," says Jodi Groh, Director of Marketing for Nanofilm. "Why Care About Lens Care emphasizes the impact an optician, who is educated about lens care, can have on customer satisfaction and reduced eyewear remakes, which has a direct impact on the practice's success."

To access the course, please visit [www.2020.com](http://www.2020.com), click on the "CE" tab at the top, and search for "Why Care about Lens Care."





## PEN's IPA Project: Access To Medical Managed Care is in Your Hands!

PEN's Advisory Board is in the second phase of a project to create a network in California that will give ODs broader access to

managed care, enabling them to expand their independent medical optometry practices.

The overall objective is to build an organization that will both represent and support independent Doctors of Optometry who wish to expand their practices to offer comprehensive medical eye care, as well as vision correction, and function as members of the integrated primary health care team.

PEN hopes to create a successful Independent Practice Association (IPA)\* that will enable California-licensed Doctors of Optometry to:

- Compete to offer and be paid fairly for comprehensive, nonsurgical medical eye care services.
- Negotiate with health and vision plans, medical groups, and other health care organizations from a position of strength as members of an integrated and credentialed network.
- Provide a framework for the profession to anticipate and capitalize on changes coming to California's health care marketplace.

The first phase of this project, begun late last year, investigated the feasibility of a managed care optometric network in

California. The Advisory Board's initial inspiration was the success of a Management Services Organization (MSO) affiliated with the State University of New York's College of Optometry, called the University Eye Care Network. The starting point was to determine whether PEN could create a similar network and compete successfully.

This second phase, estimated to take another five months, consists of raising sufficient funds from the profession to create the IPA's legal structure—an optometric professional corporation—adopting a final business plan, and seeking capital sufficient to begin operations.

Visit **PEN's IPA page** [www.PrimaryEye.net/ipa](http://www.PrimaryEye.net/ipa) for more information about this project, including:

1. A video called "A Medical Eyecare Network: Possible Approaches to the California Market" that includes the results of our initial inquiry and our recommendations for Phase Two.
2. "Frequently Asked Questions."
3. Detailed information about California managed care and the IPA's place in it.

\*A good working definition of an "Independent Practice Association (IPA)" is a group of providers, typically MDs, who organize into a corporation which contracts with HMOs. In IPAs, these providers retain their traditional practice autonomy, while integrating themselves into self-directed groups that solve group problems and exert political influence within the managed care system.

## New Billing Tool from PEN

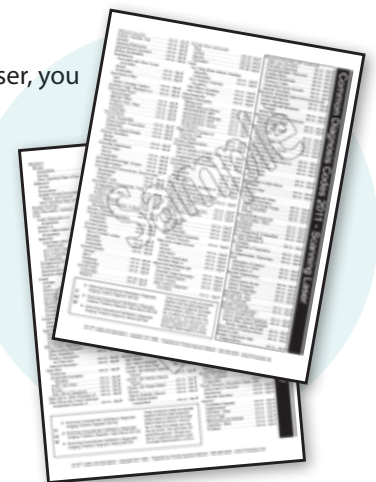
One of the most "in-demand" products that PEN produces is the Common Diagnosis Codes Card. So, when the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS) issued a multitude of new codes this year for the Scanning Laser, it was only natural that we should create **Common Diagnosis Codes 2011 – Scanning Laser**.

Just as with our popular *Common Diagnosis Codes Card*, this easy-to-use card includes an indispensable key of specific procedure codes and diagnosis codes that are payable together. This 2-sided, laminated card conveniently lists codes alphabetically by category.

If your practice has a scanning laser, you will want one of these cards in each exam room as well as one for your biller...the more you order, the less you pay per card:

- 1 card:** \$11.25  
(Non-Members \$14.00) each
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(Non-Members \$11.25) each
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Essilor's discount for **PEN Members is 30%**

## New Enrollment Application Fee

The National Supplier Clearinghouse (NSC) began implementing an application fee on all applications (855S or PECOS) received on or after March 25, 2011. **The 2011 enrollment fee of \$505 is due anytime a supplier is enrolling in the Durable Medical Equipment (DME) program for the first time, re-enrolling, reactivating, or adding a location.** The fee has been prescribed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in order to "cover the cost of program integrity efforts including the cost of screening associated with provider enrollment processes."

In future years, the application fee may change based upon adjustments made to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Areas. Payment of the application fee must be made at [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov), search for Medicare and select "CMS Medicare Application Fee." It is recommended that the receipt of payment from the [pay.gov](http://pay.gov) website be submitted with applications and certification statements submitted to the NSC.

### Hardship Exception

A supplier may apply for a Hardship Exception by submitting a letter with supporting documentation that describes the hardship and why the hardship justifies an exception. In order to be considered, the letter must be submitted at the same time as the application or certification statement. A provider cannot "simply assert that the imposition of the application fee represents a financial hardship." The provider must make a strong argument to support its request and may possibly be required to submit "historical cost reports and recent financial reports."

It is important to note that the NSC will not process applications or certification statements until the enrollment fee has been paid or the Hardship Exception has been approved. Once approved the application will be processed in the order it was received.

**For more information, visit [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov).**

(Continued from page 2)

## A Happy Employee Equals a Happy Patient

By Mary E Schmidt, PEN Instructor, President of EyeSystems Consulting

2. Create detailed job descriptions with tasks aligned to be measurable and enforceable. Use them, every day, week and month. This is not something that should languish in the file cabinet. Review them and discuss the employee's performance on a regular basis. Develop a long and short term plan.
3. Schedule one-on-one monthly meeting between each staff member and the office manager. These meetings should be as positive as possible but deal with issues as needed. They should be regular and anticipated by the employee. Schedule one staff member for the first Tuesday each month, another the second Wednesday, third Thursday and so on. The plan is to keep the employee connected with their immediate supervisor to check in on fatigue and boredom but also growth and development. Employees love to be "seen."
4. Set goals for the practice as a whole. Having the employees work as a team will keep them engaged and connected with each other. Consider having all employees give feedback on their co-workers, this must be constructive and very structured in order to be effective. (If you'd like a sample of a co-worker survey, email [mary@eyesystems.info](mailto:mary@eyesystems.info) or call 925-932-1174.)
5. Establish a reward system when goals are achieved. I recommend a financial reward and monthly distribution. If everyone experiences the positives of hard work they will stay engaged and enjoy where they work.

If your practice is running well and needs a little fine-tuning now and then, remember to acknowledge that and reward those dedicated paraoptometrists with an unexpected perk.

Starbuck cards all around? Gift cards to the local movie theatre? Pizza delivered to the practice? I suggest a little something more for that hard working manager...let me know if you need suggestions!

**"A happy employee equals a happy patient, doctor and overall practice. Engage your staff. It's worth all the effort you put into it!"**



*Mary E. Schmidt, an expert in management development, is the founder of EyeSystems Consulting ([www.EyeSystems.info](http://www.EyeSystems.info)) a professional training and practice consulting firm, specializing in the eyecare field. She has been a PEN instructor since 1995 and was Manager of Staff Education for PEN from 1995 to 2000.*



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- Advice from Nationally Renowned Experts
- Camaraderie with Your Colleagues

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