



Vision Source
SIGNATURE EYE CARE

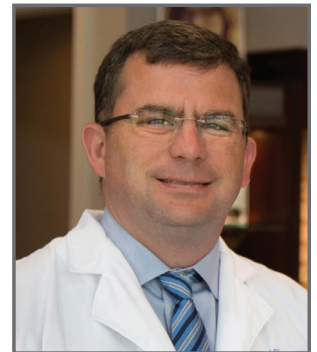
TRUSTED COLLEAGUE

Jeff Anastasio, OD

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Practice Sets Goal to Provide as Much Eye Care as Possible In-house

When the Louisiana state legislature expanded the scope of practice allowing qualified ODs to perform certain surgical procedures about two years ago, Jeff Anastasio, OD, of Covington, was ready. Dr. Anastasio has held nearly every position available with the Optometry Association of Louisiana, including serving as president in 2011-2012. Since he currently serves on the Optometry Association of Louisiana Legislative Committee, he helped lobby for the bill over the years. When it became effective on Dec. 1, 2014, Dr. Anastasio had retaken the required certification courses that allow him to perform Yag laser capsulotomies, Yag laser PI and SLTs, as well as procedures on the eyelids such as chalazion removal and other lid procedures allowed by Louisiana law. In about the first 11 months since the law took effect, Louisiana ODs have performed more than 1,000 surgical procedures, he says.



In his office, he is the only OD who is currently certified to do these procedures. Dr. Anastasio works five days a week; his wife and practice partner, Shelly Anastasio, OD, is in the office two days a week, and a third OD, Earl Primo, MS, OD, also covers two days a week. In addition, a pediatric ophthalmologist sees patients in the 3,000-square-foot office a half day each week, and a general ophthalmologist comes in a few times a month for surgeries that can't be done by Dr. Anastasio. Dr. Anastasio says that since he has been able to handle some surgical cases, the MDs can focus on the more complex cases when they're in. "We can take the less-involved cases off their plate, so it has worked well for all of us," he says.

Dr. Anastasio says that this latest evolution in the 11-year-old practice follows the direction it's been heading in quite naturally. The practice goal has been to develop an eye care center where most patients can receive all of their eye care needs in one place.

As the scope of practice and the relationships with the MDs has progressed, the doctors are able to meet more of their patients' needs. Several years ago, the doctors decided that they had to move from their small office to a larger one. But in order to make ends meet with a move like that, it meant that they'd need to increase the volume of patients seen. That meant hiring more staff and making sure that all employees were well-trained. They found several technicians who had worked with surgeons before, and several of the staff members were trained in refractions and contact lenses, too.

"We've see the benefit of a very well-trained staff. Our technicians can bring patients through pretesting, autorefraction, corneal topography and a complete history along with refraction. If any additional testing was ordered, they'll get those tests completed. That allows me to spend my time with patients analyzing, rather than collecting, the data," he says. Dr. Anastasio has become quite adept at entering his own notes in the electronic health records, although the other ODs are accompanied by a technician/scribe in the exam room. "We all use Sidenotes IM, an instant messaging system, that allows us to communicate quickly and efficiently if I need contact lenses pulled or testing done or if I'm ready to hand off the patient to an optician. Paging the optician into the exam room is a great way to introduce the optician and reiterate my recommendations," he says.

With 15 employees, having a well-honed internal communication strategy is critical. "We have a lot of complex contact lens fits, and the only way that we can keep up with the pace is by having technicians and staff who take on as many of the duties as possible and keep everything moving."

The practice became a Vision Source® practice about eight years ago. "The practice has flourished and grown dramatically and, no doubt, Vision Source® has played a role in that," he says. "We can always get advice from a number of doctors and local group. All the Vision Source® Member Support Center staff members have been wonderful, too. And that's on top of the great savings."