

## President's Insights April 2022

During one of what feels like millions of hours of continuing education hours I have taken in my 29 years of practice, I learned a valuable habit from a practice management consultant. He advised us to block out time periodically from seeing patients to move through the entire office flow through the eyes of a patient. Instead of rushing in everyday and getting straight down to the daily routine, really observe the practice: how the outside of the office looks, is the optical tidy and organized, are the patient care coordinators asking patients the correct questions, is the waiting area tidy, are patients waiting too long, sit in the exam chair to make sure the exam room looks clean and tidy from their view, are the employees happy, etc. It is important to take oneself outside of the daily routine to observe the details we might otherwise miss. If there is a silver lining to the pandemic, it would be that many were forced to, or given the opportunity to, view their practices, and their lives, from a new perspective. One example of how this impacted our practice is that, while we were sad when two cherished employees quit, we couldn't have been happier for them as they both decided to move out of state because it was imperative for their children to grow up near family.

VOSH, like the rest of society, is learning how to live and work with the long-term effects of Covid-19. The pandemic forced us to curtail our humanitarian clinics. It also gave us the opportunity and the time to focus on other opportunities. Providing patient care at our humanitarian clinics has always been, and will remain to be, at the core of what VOSH does. We have used the pandemic downtime to focus on ways to improve our clinics to have even larger and long-term impacts.

We have learned the importance of working alongside the communities we care for. We treat each patient as an individual and with respect. We learn about the language and culture of the people we are caring for. We ask the community what they need and how they would like their care delivered. We reach out to government agencies to make sure we are promoting the recognition of and elevation of optometry. We source local products to help support local businesses. We reach out to nearby schools and professional organizations so we can provide learning opportunities and facilitate cooperation.

VOSH's focus on sustainability and education has had other tangible benefits. There has been an incredible increase in enthusiasm and participation from our international chapters. The Latin American Advisory Committee advises us on concerns, projects and priorities of the region from the point of view of the region allowing us to prioritize their needs. VOSH is working towards facilitating the sharing of education and resources among optometry schools in Latin America with the South - South mentorship program. Domestic and international members alike have benefited from the quality COPE accredited events that are being offered by our Education Committee. VOSH Corps is focusing on helping optometrists in Vietnam and elsewhere achieve advanced degrees so that they can return home and educate the next generation of optometrists.

One of the best ways to improve your life, your practice or your organization is to find someone you trust, ask for their evaluation and opinion, and then listen carefully to their advice. Trusted sources will tell you what you need to do to improve or what not to change because it works. Likewise with VOSH, we always want to hear from

our chapters, our volunteers and our patients. I sincerely ask you to take a moment; take a break from your daily routine and reach out with any concerns, suggestions and questions so that we can continue to improve. VOSH is always striving to deliver care and education at the highest level so we can meet our goal of eliminating vision deficiency due to uncorrected refractive error and providing vision care worldwide for people who can neither afford nor obtain such care.

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