

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Dr. Glaucomflecken Brings Joy to Mid-Year Forum 2022

William E. Flanary, MD—better known by his TikTok handle @drglaucomflecken and his YouTube channel Dr. Glaucomflecken—brought smiles and laughter to his colleagues during the Mid-Year Forum 2022 closing session, “On the Brighter Side.” The session took place on Friday, April 8, closing out a series of hearings on topics that included medical waste, the profession’s changing demographics, and the forces impacting physician payment. The closing session steered the attendees’ focus to the joy the profession brings them.

Dr. Flanary, a comprehensive ophthalmologist and comedian, kicked off the closing session with impressions of his colleagues. Then, Academy President-Elect Daniel J. Briceland, MD, and Trustee-at-Large Purnima S. Patel, MD, comoderated a panel discussion that highlighted ophthalmic innovations, global efforts (including treatment of Ebola), and more. The session closed with a poignant video featuring 14 ophthalmologists speaking about the profession they each love.

Watch the video at aao.org/love-ophthalmology.

See Dr. Flanary’s impressions at www.tiktok.com/@drglaucomflecken.



ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE. The Mid-Year Forum 2022 closing session featured TikTok’s Dr. Glaucomflecken and concluded with a video tribute to ophthalmology. (Front row, from left: comoderator Dr. Briceland, comoderator Dr. Flanary, and panelist Philip Rizzuto, MD. Back row, from left: panelists Jessica Shantha, MD; Julia Haller, MD; and R.V. Paul Chan, MD; and comoderator Dr. Patel.)

LDP Class Gets Advocacy Pearls

The Academy’s Leadership Development Program (LDP) Class of 2022 joined attendees at the Mid-Year Forum in Washington, D.C., for sessions on policy and practice management.

On April 7, the class also participated in a session titled “Get Politically Active,” led by LDP Director Chris Albanis, MD. This advocacy session, created just for the LDP, took place at the Capitol Hill Club, and U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, MD (R-Ind.), served as the keynote speaker. Dr. Bucshon encouraged the Class of 2022 to stay engaged in advocating for patients. He shared advocacy pearls to help get important messages across to legislators, including, “stay on your message over and over and over, be aggressive, and don’t assume that legislators know your issue.” Following Dr. Bucshon’s presentation, Academy President-Elect Daniel J. Briceland, MD, and Ophth-

PAC Committee Chair Sohail J. Hasan, MD, PhD, presented Dr. Bucshon with an Academy Visionary Award for his outstanding support of ophthalmology and medicine.

TAKE NOTICE

MIPS: June 15 Deadline for EHR or PMS Changes

In some cases, practices that have integrated their electronic health record (EHR) system with the IRIS Registry (aao.org/iris-registry) may need to repeat the data mapping process.

A new or updated system. If your practice has switched to a new EHR system or practice management system (PMS) or made modifications to an existing system, such as implementing a system upgrade or moving from a server-based to a cloud-based system, you need to check whether the IRIS Registry can still reliably extract data from your records.



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Notify your IRIS Registry vendor by June 15. If you think that you may need to redo the data mapping process, notify one of the two IRIS Registry vendors no later than June 15. If you miss this deadline, you might not be able to use IRIS Registry–EHR integration to participate in this year’s Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS).

Who is your IRIS Registry vendor? The integration of practices’ EHRs with the IRIS Registry is gradually being transitioned from the original vendor, FIGmd, to Verana Health. Practices that have already been transitioned or are being transitioned later this year will report 2022 MIPS via the IRIS Registry with Verana Health’s support. Others will report 2022 MIPS with FIGmd’s support before transitioning to Verana Health in 2023. (Note: a small percentage of practices have EHR systems that will not be transitioned to Verana Health. These practices can report 2022 MIPS via the IRIS Registry with FIGmd’s support. For 2023 reporting, they can see if their EHR vendor does MIPS reporting, use their EHR-generated files to report directly to CMS, or deal directly with FIGmd or another registry.)

How to contact your IRIS Registry vendor. If you are working with Verana Health, contact the Practice Experience Manager assigned to you or email irisdatalink@veranahealth.com. If you are working with FIGmd, submit a help desk ticket (aao.org/iris-registry/submit-help-desk-ticket).

More information on the transition. If you haven’t heard from Verana Health about the transition, email irisdatalink@verana-health.com. You also can learn more at aao.org/iris-registry/ehr-systems.

More information on MIPS. To learn more about using the Academy’s IRIS Registry for MIPS, go to aao.org/iris-registry/medicare-reporting. Also use the *2022 IRIS Registry Preparation Kit and User Guide*, which you can download for free or purchase as a spiral-bound book (aao.org/iris-registry).

Two IRIS Registry Research Grant Applications Due Aug. 2

Don’t miss the Aug. 2 application deadline for two private practice research



Spectacular Spectacles

On View Through Spring 2023

SPECTACULAR SPECTACLES. *The Truhlsen-Marmor Museum of the Eye in San Francisco is spotlighting its Spectacular Spectacles exhibit through March 2023. The exhibit is augmented by a brochure on the history of vision correction and by staff-led events featuring spectacles you can touch. Visit the museum for fun giveaways and hands-on activities throughout the year. Learn more at aao.org/exhibition-detail/spectacular-spectacles.*

funds: The Knights Templar Eye Foundation (KTEF) Pediatric Ophthalmology Fund and The H. Dunbar Hoskins Jr., MD, Center for Quality Eye Care IRIS Registry Research Fund.

The KTEF fund supports big data analyses that investigate pediatric eye diseases in order to uncover optimal, real-world approaches to prevention and treatment.

The H. Dunbar Hoskins Jr., MD, fund supports clinicians who seek to answer questions that can help improve patient care. Both funds aim to support Academy members in private practice who want to harness the power of the Academy’s IRIS Registry to improve their practices and their patients’ lives.

Learn more and apply at aao.org/iris-registry/research.

EyeWiki: Winner of the Best Article Revision Contest

The first-ever winner of the EyeWiki Best Article Revision Contest is Ryan T. Yanagihara, MD, for his revisions to Management of Choroidal Melanoma and Ciliary Body Melanoma.

EyeWiki introduced this new contest to recognize the impact of ophthalmologists who make improvements to existing articles. Winners choose from a selection of prizes from the Academy store.

EyeWiki is the Academy’s collaborative online encyclopedia, where physi-

cians, patients, and the public can view content written by ophthalmologists that covers the spectrum of eye disease, diagnosis, and treatment. In addition to the Best Article Revision Contest, EyeWiki hosts two other annual writing contests. One is for U.S. residents and fellows and the other is for ophthalmologists outside the United States.

Visit EyeWiki at aao.org/eyewiki.

Volunteer: Record Your Lectures for Residents

Want to reach more residents with your lectures? Using PowerPoint or similar technology, turn a resident lecture into an Academy online course with a voice-over.

Before you start recording, contact Sarah Page at spage@aao.org, who will work with you to get your topic approved by the Committee for Resident Education leadership. Next, the Academy will provide clear instructions for recording your voice over your lecture content.

Learn more at aao.org/volunteering, then choose “Speak.” (*This is just one of many Academy volunteer opportunities.*)

ACADEMY RESOURCES

Botox—Download These New Coding Fact Sheets

Does your practice inject botulinum toxin? Make sure that your billers have downloaded these three fact sheets:

- *Coding for Blepharospasm, Hemifacial Spasm*
- *Coding Botox for Treatment of Migraine*
- *Coding Botox for Treatment of Strabismus*

Members of the Academy and of the American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives (AAOE) can download these fact sheets from the AAOE's Coding Resources page at aao.org/practice-management/coding/coding-index.

Watch the 2022 Update on Glaucoma Webinar on June 23

The 2022 Update on Glaucoma, developed in coordination with the American Glaucoma Society, takes place on June 23 at 5:30 p.m. ET. Topics will include drug delivery, gonioscopy-assisted transluminal trabeculotomy, devices on the horizon, new medications on the horizon, and further advances in medications.

For more information or to register, visit aao.org/clinical-webinars.

Getting Ready to Buy or Sell a Practice? Retiring?

To ensure a successful practice transition, you must invest time in thorough planning. Learn what this would involve during a one-hour webinar.

Transitioning your Practice: Retiring, Selling, or Buying a Practice takes place on Thursday, June 23, at 11:00 a.m. PT. To learn more about this and other practice management webinars, visit store.aao.org/practice-management/webinar.html.

Watch Physician Wellness Webinars

In the fall of 2021, the Academy polled its members about the top three threats to their profession, and 32% of respondents indicated that physician burnout is one of their top concerns.

The Academy and the Association of Veterans Affairs Ophthalmologists collaborated to create a two-part webinar series that addresses burnout, including how to avoid it or—if necessary—manage it.

In these recorded webinars, a panel of physicians discusses data on the ex-

D.C. REPORT

How to Respond to the Rise of Medicare Advantage Plans

Medicare Advantage plans are just a few years—if not months—from becoming the most common medical coverage choice for America's seniors. CMS reported nearly 28 million patients enrolled in Medicare Advantage as of December 2021—44% of total Medicare enrollees.

What does this growth mean for a profession like ophthalmology, which is heavily Medicare-based? A few things are likely.

Increased administrative burdens. As for-profit businesses, the insurers that offer Medicare Advantage use measures like prior authorization requirements and step therapy to contain costs.

Greater payment volatility. Unlike the once-annual changes in fee-for-service, Medicare Advantage plans have wide latitude to change reimbursement rates at any time. This can even happen mid-year if the doctor's signed contract permits it. For example, Aetna recently notified some Florida ophthalmologists of an upcoming dramatic cut in reimbursement for ophthalmic surgery. (This type of change is not common.)

Narrower networks. Medicare Advantage plans have also been known to save money by dropping doctors who provide more services or order more tests than the plan wants to pay for. In fact, shortly after passage of the Affordable Care Act, some plans cut ophthalmologists in subspecialties like retina. When the Academy explained that comprehensive ophthalmologists could not always provide the more specialized treatments, the plans reinstated the subspecialists.

What you can do. Here are several things ophthalmologists can do as the Medicare system continues to evolve.

- **Invest in your staff.** Your staff plays a critical role in staying on top of insurer requirements, which helps ensure that approvals flow smoothly.
- **Get involved with professional societies.** Academy advocacy has successfully overturned some shortsighted insurer and government policies and is actively pushing to change 2023 payment plans. CMS proposes to increase Medicare Advantage rates for 2023 but may hold fee-for-service physician payments level or even cut them. Successful advocacy on such issues takes member engagement.
- **Communicate with legislators.** Congress oversees the Medicare program, which gives it authority to limit administrative burdens like prior authorization. Constituent feedback and relationships play a significant role in getting legislators to take action on these issues.
- **Strive for a positive attitude.** "You need to learn to work with and understand the companies that are in the private Medicare Advantage plan space," said **Michael X. Repka, MD, MBA**, Academy medical director for health policy. "A negative attitude only makes things harder."

tent of ophthalmologist burnout as well as personal experiences with it. You'll also learn mindfulness strategies that can help you build calm, enhance your focus, heighten your compassion for yourself and others, and shift limiting thought patterns.

Watch the recorded webinars at aao.org/physician-wellness/physician-burnout.

Visit the No. 1 Job Site for Ophthalmology

The Ophthalmology Job Center is an easy way for hiring practices and qualified candidates to connect. Employers can post jobs directly and target the most qualified ophthalmic audience, while candidates can search hundreds of listings by location and subspecialty.

Learn more at aao.org/jobcenter.