

Academy Notebook

NEWS • TIPS • RESOURCES

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Meet the New Secretary for Ophthalmic Practice

On Jan. 1, Ravi D. Goel, MD, became Secretary for Ophthalmic Practice, with oversight of the Academy's practice management arm, the American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives (AAOE). *EyeNet* asked him about his vision for the future of AAOE.

Q: What excites you the most about your new role?

A: I'm excited about the opportunity to increase collaboration among physicians and administrators. We've seen great success with the Ophthalmology Business Summit, which focuses on increasing leadership skills among both physicians and their administrators. As a former Young Ophthalmologist (YO), I also want to create opportunities for residents and fellows to take advantage of AAOE's practice management information. Whether as an employed physician or entrepreneur, YOs must be as prepared to handle the business side as they are the clinical side when they enter practice.

Q: How urgent are today's practice management challenges?

A: Every practice is one ransomware attack or reimbursement audit



DR. GOEL: "As practice management becomes more challenging, the AAOE is developing new ways to help."

away from slipping to the break-even point—or worse. An increased focus on practice management is essential as ophthalmic practices face increasing regulatory, payer-based, and nonclinical challenges. Medicare and private payer reimbursement, cybersecurity, employment challenges, and mandates are but a few of the concerns that physician and practice management leaders face on a daily basis.

Q: How do those challenges impact the way you run your practice?

A: I'm a member of a two-physician private practice. When our practice talks about technology and regulatory compliance, the physician leaders and administrators all wear multiple hats. Because of the complex nature of these challenges, we've found that physician/administrator collaboration and sharing different perspectives have helped us make the best strategic decisions for our practice. These are common challenges faced by solo practices as well as groups with dozens

of colleagues spread across many offices and subspecialties.

Q: Private equity is front of mind for many ophthalmologists. What steps is AAOE taking to help educate its members?

A: I'm fascinated by the march forward of private equity across medicine and within ophthalmology. I will lead a hearing at the Academy's Mid-Year Forum entitled "Private Equity 2020: Challenges for SOs and YOs." Private equity and alternative models offer constant challenges of aggregation and integration. This session will highlight recent trends, legal pitfalls, and the unique challenges faced by both senior and young ophthalmologists. The session will include expert advice to navigate a post-private equity world for small and large groups. (Mid-Year Forum will take place April 22-25, aao.org/myf.)

Q: What is your vision for empowering practicing physicians and residents in today's practice environment?

A: The Academy must continue to develop cutting-edge initiatives to help educate colleagues. It must also innovate across practice settings and subspecialties. Executive leadership training programs will help members navigate the changing landscape. We offer the Ophthalmology Business Summit for physician and practice administrator colleagues to come together each year to keep updated on the latest trends in ophthalmic practice management, leadership,



and teambuilding. (March 14-15 in Chicago, aao.org/business-summit.)

Surveys consistently tell us that a major reason for joining AAOE is networking. The AAOE provides many in-person courses and master classes during the annual meeting, filled with practice management pearls to help empower colleagues in their practice. The dream is to share this information through other channels, such as mobile devices and social media platforms. That's where colleagues of all ages are consuming news. Examples on the clinical side are the ONE Network and the AAO Ophthalmic Education App, which are wonderful resources. I would like to empower and educate colleagues by developing practice management resources using similar platforms.

For more about the AAOE, see "Solutions for the Business Side of Practice," next page.

2020 Is the Year to Educate

The Academy kicked off its yearlong 2020 public information campaign last month with the release of survey results about the U.S. public's knowledge and attitudes about eye health.

The survey, which was conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of the Academy, uncovered key gaps in knowledge. And what Americans don't know is putting them at risk of vision loss. With the number of people affected by potentially blinding eye diseases expected to double in the next 30 years, it's critical that people better understand eye health.

That's why the campaign is urging people to get smart about eye health in 2020. Throughout the year, the Academy will encourage people to educate themselves about eye diseases and see an ophthalmologist, the only eye care professional trained to recognize all the potential threats to vision.

Here are some of the key findings from The Harris Poll:

- Less than half (47%) are aware that vision loss and blindness do not affect all people equally.
- Only around one-third of adults surveyed (37%) know you do not always experience symptoms before you lose vision to eye diseases.

- Less than half (47%) are aware your brain can make it difficult to know if you are losing your vision by adapting to vision loss.

The impacts of vision loss are also underappreciated. Another key finding showed that people are unaware that vision loss can also amplify the adverse effects of other chronic illnesses. Although the majority of adults (57%) are aware that vision loss in adults increases the risk for injury or death, only 1 in 4 (24%) know that vision loss in adults is associated with psychological problems such as social isolation and depression.

Study after study has shown that people fear vision loss more than they fear cancer, stroke, heart disease, and other serious health problems. What this new study shows is that Americans are scared about an issue they know very little about. The year 2020, with all its symbolism, is the year to change that.

Want to join the Academy's 2020 campaign? Visit aao.org/2020-year-of-the-eye.

TAKE NOTICE

Volunteer Opportunity: Attend Congressional Advocacy Day

The Academy's Congressional Advocacy Day is a unique opportunity to lobby members of the U.S. Congress on the issues that affect ophthalmology practices and patients. Ophthalmology must play a leadership role in educating new and seasoned lawmakers so that they can make informed decisions that promote quality eye care.

The Academy coordinates congressional appointments, prepares participants with a full issue briefing, and provides background information and talking points on the key issues as well as tips on effective lobbying.

Congressional Advocacy Day will



ADVOCACY IN ACTION. James Chelnis, MD, an Academy Young Ophthalmologist, speaks with a staff person in the office of Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

take place April 23, in conjunction with the Academy's annual Mid-Year Forum in Washington, D.C.—but you do not have to attend Mid-Year Forum to participate in Congressional Advocacy Day.

Learn more at aao.org/cad and watch for other advocacy opportunities at aao.org/volunteering.

Academy Year in Review

In 2019, Academy leaders, volunteers, and staff demonstrated continued dedication to advancing ophthalmology and maximizing technology. Read *2019 Year in Review* to learn about the Academy's many achievements, including:

- launched the AAO Ophthalmic Education App,
- grew monthly EyeSmart page views to more than 3 million, and
- nearly completed construction on the new Truhlsen-Marmor Museum of the Eye.

Learn about these and other successes at aao.org/yearinreview.

Support the New Museum of the Eye

The Truhlsen-Marmor Museum of the Eye is nearing completion, thanks to the many Academy members who helped raise \$11 million of the museum's \$12 million fundraising goal. The exhibit crew is busy putting finishing touches on the visual and interactive displays. Help the museum cross its fundraising finish line and bring the science of sight to the world by making a donation today at aao.org/museumcampaign.

ACADEMY RESOURCES

Residents: Prepare for OKAP

Maximize your study time with the mobile-friendly BCSC Self-Assessment Program. Efficiently gauge your clinical knowledge with more than 2,250 questions and customizable tests tied directly to *Basic and Clinical Science Course* content. Each question provides a discussion of the correct answer, including BCSC excerpts, and complete references. Use the interactive dashboard to compare your performance with that of your peers.

Subscribe at aao.org/bcscsap.

Solutions for the Business Side of Practice

The American Academy of Ophthalmic Executives (AAOE) is the Academy's practice management affiliate. AAOE has both the solutions and the network to help you manage your practice more effectively. The numerous benefits of membership include the following:

- Access recorded webinars, download PDFs that take you step-by-step toward a more efficient practice, get the *E&M Internal Chart Auditor for Ophthalmology*, and explore other coding and practice management tools in the Practice Management Resource Library at aao.org/aaoe-resources.
- Browse and download more than 100 ready-to-use practice forms and policies, ranging from financial and billing processes to missed appointment protocols, located at aao.org/practice-management/practice-forms-library.
- Get tips from colleagues via the E-Talk listserv at aao.org/listservs.
- Check out additional information on the AAOE webpages at aao.org/practice-management.

Join AAOE at aao.org/member-services/aaoe.

MEETING MATTERS

March 14-15: Join the 2020 Ophthalmology Business Summit

Ravi D. Goel, MD, program director for the Ophthalmology Business Summit, has been working with notable business

D.C. REPORT

Be Heard! Attend Mid-Year Forum 2020

The Mid-Year Forum is one of the Academy's most significant yearly meetings, bringing the ophthalmology community together to discuss politics, policy, and practice management. Mid-Year Forum 2020 takes place April 22-25 in Washington, D.C., and is an ideal opportunity to directly advocate for your profession, learn about health care policy changes that will impact how you practice, and develop strategies for your patient-care approach.

Congressional Advocacy Day—meet legislators at their place of business. On April 23, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., attend Academy-facilitated meetings with your members of Congress and their staff to advocate for your patients and the profession of ophthalmology. Constituent meetings can help advance ophthalmology's priorities in Congress and help the Academy build lasting relationships with lawmakers and their staffs. The Academy will advise you on talking points during a dinner briefing on April 22.

Politics. Policy. Practice management. On April 23 and 24, participate in sessions discussing physician payment; perspectives on and implications of the 2020 elections; emerging risk management issues; the status of scope of practice across all of medicine; the latest landscape for private equity; and innovations in science and education.

Academy Council meeting. Beginning the afternoon of April 24 and continuing through the next day, unite with your colleagues from ophthalmic subspecialty and state societies to discuss issues facing our profession. This is also an opportunity to advise the Board of Trustees on what you view as the highest priorities for the organization.

Register. Mid-Year Forum 2020 is open to all Academy members, and preregistration is available until April 6 at aao.org/myf_registration. The registration fee is \$225 through March 12 and \$325 as of March 13 and onsite—the fee includes Mid-Year Forum materials and event-specific meals. There is an option to register to participate only in Congressional Advocacy Day for free.

experts and Academy leaders on developing an all-new, leadership-focused curriculum to address your practice's most pressing business challenges. You'll leave this solutions-oriented program with new tools and tactics for sustaining a healthy, viable practice.

Find the curriculum and register at aao.org/business-summit.

Get Ready for AAO 2020: Vision in Las Vegas

Mark your calendar: AAO 2020 takes place Nov. 14-17 at the Sands Expo/Venetian in Las Vegas. Glimpse the future as you learn about trending research, the latest drug developments, and the newest surgical devices. Turn that learning into practice with hands-on Skills Transfer labs and office man-

agement courses. Then network with friends and colleagues from around the globe at one of the many premier restaurants in Las Vegas. More than 40 celebrity chefs have chosen to open eateries in the city, so there is a restaurant to satisfy any craving.

Learn more at aao.org/2020.

Be Part of AAO 2020

Want to contribute to the world's most wide-ranging ophthalmology meeting? If you want to propose a paper/poster, or video for AAO 2020, you can submit your abstract online from March 12 through April 14. (Note: The deadline to submit an instruction course or Skills Transfer lab has already passed.)

Find more information at aao.org/presentercentral.