

THE RIGHT TEAM AT THE RIGHT TIME



With patient volumes on the rise and new therapies broadening the populations we can treat, our retina clinics are busier than ever before. And it's likely to get worse before it gets better. According to one study, the field of ophthalmology is facing a projected mismatch of 30% workforce inadequacy by 2035.¹ That means the workforce

will only be able to care for 70% of the patient population (keep in mind that this study, published in February 2024, does not consider the growth in our patient base due to the FDA approval of treatments for geographic atrophy).

For many, this means either squeezing even more patients into already packed schedules—or hiring. Unfortunately, the hiring process isn't something you learn in fellowship, and even if you've become a savvy business owner, bringing in a partner requires an entirely different set of skills. To make matters worse, that same 2024 study projected a decrease in the ophthalmology workforce of 12% by 2035, meaning there will likely be fewer clinicians out there to interview.¹

If you find yourself looking to add an associate to your practice, this issue of *Business Matters* is here to help. David Chin Yee, MD, FASRS, shares the nuances of hiring, starting with a reminder that the decision must be data-, not stress-, driven. If you monitor your patient flow data carefully, you can tackle the second most important nuance with ease: timing. Hiring too early or too late can significantly affect the success of the practice, no matter how talented that new doctor is. As a bonus, we also have a wonderful article by our anterior segment colleagues Neda Nikpoor, MD, and Neda Shamie, MD, on ways to build strong practice partnerships. Paired with Dr. Yee's advice, their tips can help you onboard a new physician to ensure long-term happiness for you, the new associate, and the practice.

If you're already set with your core team of physicians, check out the other articles in this issue, in which practice management experts dig deeper into harnessing your data to make the best business decisions, how to properly follow Medically Unlikely Edits when coding for your services, and an excellent review of cash value life insurance.

Building and maintaining a practice isn't for the faint of heart, but if you choose your team carefully and add to it at the right time, you will enjoy caring for patients while also nurturing your business. ■

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SECTION EDITOR

1. Berkowitz ST, Finn AP, Parikh R, Kuriyan AE, Patel S. Ophthalmology workforce projections in the United States, 2020 to 2035. *Ophthalmology*. 2024;131(2):133-139.

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