

THE INAUGURATION OF A NEW FEATURE FOR JBO

Over the past several years I've had the privilege of presenting a number of Regional Clinical Seminars (RCS) which are sponsored by the Optometric Extension Program Foundation (OEPF). These seminars are each of a two-day duration and are limited to about 30 attendees. I thoroughly enjoy giving these programs because of the audience's obvious interest in the topics I present and the opportunity to interact with and to get to really know some fine colleagues.

I've observed that a major side benefit for the attendees is the opportunity to communicate with each other during the course of the two days. By the middle of the first day, during the breaks, invariably there are groups of four or five people who are discussing a topic. Usually, be the topic the fairness of health care insurance claim procedures, the efficacy of Irlen lenses, or the need to dilate every patient, both sides of the coin are eloquently represented. In essence, these RCSs provide a forum for airing a number of topics these clinicians have thought about in relative isolation, and they welcome the opportunity to express their concerns and conclusions to colleagues, and to hear the "other side."

As optometry has grown and matured as a primary health care profession, the number of issues that clinicians need to be informed about has similarly increased. It has been my perception that for virtually all of these issues there is no simple answer; indeed, I find that often I vacillate between the two "sides." What is important, in the interest of personal growth and optimal patient care, is that we keep ourselves aware of what the issues are and then strive to be as well informed about them as we can.

It is in this spirit that we present in this issue the first *Viewpoints* section. It was the brainchild of Dr. Martin H. Birbaum, who suggested that this type of feature would be particularly appropriate for the readers of this *Journal*. He and I then identified a number of topics that we felt were both important and timely for our readers. Marty then contacted individuals he knew had strong feelings about each of these topics and solicited two articles representing different viewpoints for each of these.

I'm particularly pleased to announce that Dr. Birbaum has accepted continuing responsibility for the *Viewpoints* section and, in this capacity, has been appointed

Contributing Editor to this Journal. He and I have collaborated in many ways during the past three decades and I, as so many of you, am honored to be his friend and colleague. Marty has distinguished himself as clinician, teacher and author and has achieved both national and international recognition. The intent of *Viewpoints* is not to foster controversy, but rather to inform our readers that there are two sides to many of the issues and concerns facing both individual optometrists and the profession at large. We look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions for this new feature.



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