

Health Bulletin



Doctors Working Together Means Better Patient Care

(NAPSA)—In the face of ever-increasing costs and challenges to our health care system, consumer advocates, policymakers, insurance providers, patients and doctors are looking for ways to reform the system so that everyone receives high-quality, affordable care.

One solution that appears to be easing concerns regarding rising medical costs, access to care and limited choice of providers is increased collaboration among health care providers.

“Cooperation among health care professionals is critical in order to provide quality, comprehensive care that is safe and effective for all Americans,” said Dr. Christopher Quinn, a doctor of optometry and American Optometric Association Trustee, who practices in Iselin, N.J.

Eye care represents a successful example of this kind of collaboration, with optometrists and ophthalmic surgeons working together to deliver effective care to their patients. This partnership saves patients time and money and gives them peace of mind, knowing that their doctors are communicating with one another.

“Care needs to be seamless among doctors so that we can help treat the patient, educate their family members and make sure that we know as much as possible about a patient’s overall health,” said Dr. James Milite, an orbital and ophthalmic plastic surgeon who works in cooperation with Dr. Quinn and other doctors when treating patients. “Health care providers need to focus on patients first

instead of profits, business models or competition within the industry. When doctors don’t work together, they are limiting patient care and affecting patient outcomes.”

The American Optometric Association (AOA) recommends that consumers consider the following tips to help ensure continuity of care among their own health care providers:

- Remember that as a patient, you are the most important person on your health care team—so speak up and ask questions until you’re comfortable with the information doctors give you;

- Bring a list of doctors you have seen in the past or are seeing currently with you, and make sure that list includes doctors’ names and phone numbers;

- Bring a list of medications you are on and the dosage for each medication with you to all doctor appointments;

- Do not be afraid to ask questions about what services you are getting and who is providing them; write down the answers you get, and make sure you understand what you are hearing so that you can provide the information to your other health care providers if appropriate.

“There are solutions to help alleviate today’s health care burdens, and this team approach is one example of an effective best practice,” said Dr. Quinn. “By working together with other health care providers, we continue to ensure that patients enjoy greater, easier and more cost-effective access to eye and overall health care.”