

## Current times are challenging, indeed. Each of us has been impacted by the far-reaching effects of COVID-19, both in our personal and professional lives.

In light of the disruption being experienced around the world, Essilor is working to build on its foundation of support for private practice and keep optometry strong. We are confident in the ability of our industry to recover and know that patients will soon return to you to address their changing visual and eye health needs. Out of a challenging situation is an opportunity to elevate the patient experience.

To prepare for this time of recovery, we have compiled some essential tips to help get your practice, staff, and patients ready.

### Tip 1: Choose partners and leverage the power of community

It is more important than ever for us all to stay connected. There are many groups and resources out there, so it is important to connect and access the entirety of what may be available to help your practice.

- **Leverage the [resources for small businesses](#)** including financial and operational support (Small Business Administration, local and state chambers of commerce, practice accountant, etc.)
- **Access [professional resources](#)** for industry guidelines and best practices (AOA, CDC, etc.)
- **Investigate programs offered by your vendors.** Essilor offers options to address your unique business needs, including deferred billing and promotions to help alleviate financial burden.
- **Take advantage of educational resources** to keep your staff engaged, trained, and ready to provide optimal patient experiences. [ECPU](#)<sup>®</sup>, Essilor's robust online learning platform is offering 30 days of complimentary access.
- **Seek support from the community.** [Doctor alliances](#) such as [Vision Source](#), PERC, and OptiPort, offer resources to help navigate this difficult time and emerge strong during recovery.



North America's premier network of private practice optometrists provides a robust Member's only COVID-19 content hub with practice management tools, clinical knowledge and business advice.

### Tip 2: Stay financially sound through the crisis



- **Leverage your professional associations**, such as AOA, State Associations, Optometry Schools, SBA and Governmental Resources to aid in positioning your practice for financial success.
- **To manage cash flow, examine operating expenses very closely**, and postpone those that are not business critical. Carefully evaluate Cost of Goods Sold, staffing expenses, cost of occupancy, marketing and general overhead.
- **Optimize revenue** by considering extended hours, collecting co-pays and fees at the time of visit, timely claim filing, and exploring alternatives to vision care plans for those who lost their coverage.

## Tip 3:

# Prepare your office and staff for patient return



**PLEASE NOTE:**  
Transitions® UV lamps are **NOT efficient to eliminate microbial agents**, which include COVID-19 virus, and should not be considered an effective tool for lens & frame sterilization.

It is important to consider local and state guidelines and conditions when choosing a re-opening date. Additional tips that can get your office and staff ready include:

- **Develop a specific protocol for sanitizing all areas of the practice**, as well as safety guidelines for staff, appointments, in-office process, and handling emergency infections.
- **Leverage digital technology for tele-medicine** to care for an expanded group of patients and needs.
- **Provide PPE to your staff and train them** in the proper use of the equipment. You may also elect to provide PPE to patients entering the practice.
- **Develop a new staffing cadence** for your practice, which may include shifts of doctors and staff, a new PTO policy or job sharing.
- **Communicate with your staff** on a regular basis to keep them updated. Pay attention to the concerns of your staff both voiced and implied. Help them adjust to the new normal.
- **Make sure you have an HR resource** to provide professional guidance and advice.

## Tip 4:

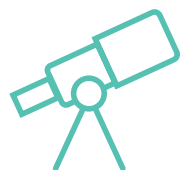
# Communicate with patients



- **Communicate early and often with your patients.** Stay engaged and share your challenges and concerns as well as your commitment to open for comprehensive care as soon as it is safe to do so.
- **Communicate key areas of patients' interest and concerns:**
  - What you are doing to prepare the practice to be a safe and inviting environment
  - Personal hygiene and in-office safety protocol to ensure patients' peace of mind
  - Options of in-office and telehealth services and hours
  - Emergency visit process
- **Print signage to place outside** the practice warning sick or exposed patients and family members to reschedule their visit.
- **Educate yourself and the community** on possible eye conditions that may be a sign of COVID-19 and share with patients.
- **Use marketing to attract new patients** – website content, social media, digital advertising.
- **Consider marketing messages** on topics like Blue light protection lens solutions, backup glasses for contact wearers, and sunglasses which are timely and more relevant to patient concerns.

## Tip 5:

# Plan for the future



- **Organize a taskforce** to constantly evaluate and proactively develop an emergency protocol.
- **Assess current cash reserves.** It is suggested to have 30-90 days of operating expenses on-hand.
- **Update your emergency management plan** to include a continuity of business operations plan that is customized to your practice.
- **Regularly test remote access** to your practice computers and telephone systems.
- **Identify and develop relationships** with key sales/business partners and join doctor groups to stay connected.

**Whatever the challenges ahead, we are stronger together.** Participating in strong communities can help you manage day-to-day struggles, endure crisis, and position your business for safe and effective recovery.

Vision Source provides members with networking, best practice sharing, cost saving opportunities, and a robust community of like-minded professionals, intent on keeping private practice strong. To learn more, please visit [visionsourceplan.com](https://visionsourceplan.com).



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