

Dashboard Data

Using Metrics to Discover the Patients' Path to Purchase



MARK TOSH / SENIOR EDITOR

From health care to retail, data has become an invaluable resource for businesses and practitioners. It's what many see as the key ingredient to better meeting, and exceeding, consumer or patient expectations, and it provides a critical yardstick for measuring success across a variety of metrics.

In eyecare and optical retailing, the growing interest in data also has led to an increase in the number of options partner companies are developing that collect, track and analyze the data for ECPs to draw upon to manage their practice. From software and tech companies to alliances and large retail groups, a dashboard or other analytical tools have become part of the de facto offering to member ECPs.

"Data analytics is becoming increasingly more important in our practice," said Michael Cymbor, OD, FAAO, of Nittany Eye Associates of State College, Pa. "We utilize it monthly to understand

practice patterns among our optometrists. Not only does it help us maintain proper inventories of products and supplements, it helps us understand which optometrists prefer certain vendors. This is invaluable with having 12 optometrists and five offices," said Cymbor, whose practice utilizes GPN Technologies' EDGEPro dashboard.

Data, both big and small, can provide insight on the entire purchase process, including consumers' needs and wants, how they make the decision to buy or not buy a product, when to buy, expectations and barriers to purchase, among other factors, according to Randy Baldwin, vice president, marketing, specialty industries and retail, CareCredit. "The more relevant insight you have can make it easier to identify opportunities and to develop strategies to put your company and products to the best advantage," Baldwin said.

"And [data] can help you identify consumer behavior you may want to change. For example, if consumers tend to want to shop online after they

get their Rx, data may provide insight on when and how you can help shift that behavior," he added.

Cymbor noted that he utilizes the practice's patient communication software dashboard on a weekly basis to review at a glance patient satisfaction trends. "This helps me understand if we are having issues with certain departments, employees or processes. In the past, I often didn't know these things unless an employee told me or a patient complained directly to me," he added, noting that the dashboard enables him to see and to react to problems much earlier in the process, which "benefits our patients tremendously."

Erin Nevelow, OD, of Nevelow Eye Associates in San Antonio, Texas, said that her practice began working with The Power Practice consultants about three years ago "to help us figure out why our practice was doing good, but not great." As part of this group, the practice signed up with Glimpse (now ABB Analyze, powered by Glimpse) in an ef-

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ABB Analyze, Powered by Glimpse Debuts a Mobile App Version

With a new name and updated features, ABB Analyze, powered by Glimpse, is a key player in the performance dashboard sector. ABB Optical, which acquired Glimpse earlier this year, announced the new name in September as part of an overall “reintroduction of its brand” to the eyecare sector. ABB Analyze is under the company’s ABB Business Solutions group, which is designed to provide ECPs with operational solutions to help them attract and retain patients and drive efficiencies in their practices.

ABB says its dashboard is the first “push” informatics service designed to measure and track performance, identify growth opportunities, forecast future trends, and compare results among peers. Along with its new name, ABB Analyze recently rolled out new features to the dashboard platform, as well, according to Erika Jurens senior vice president of strategy and commercialization.



Casey Hedberg

Erika Jurens

Among the new features are a total capture rate metric, which illustrates how well a practice is performing in terms of capturing sales to a patient. “This is a really important part of increasing [both] revenue overall and patient satisfaction overall,” Jurens noted. There’s also a new annual supply capture percentage (which is the

ability to measure the quantity of CL boxes sold to a patient). And a new rankings feature within ABB Analyze that includes key performance indicators (KPIs) that allow a practice to see how it stacks up against a national average.

Another new report comes under the rubric of practice assessment, which ABB Analyze calls a “GPA” indicator. This essentially is a practice assessment measure that allows doctors to periodically review their performance and “kind of check in and do an assessment of their overall practice and benchmark themselves almost like a credit score,” Jurens explained.

The “GPA” measure also allows practices to review how they are doing over a longer-term period. Glimpse founder Casey Hedberg (now with ABB) noted that practices requested this metric and an overall score for the total practice performance.

ABB Analyze also introduced a true mobile app version, which Hedberg said is “possibly the most significant new addition, in part, because it plays into the idea that the more you measure, the more you improve.” He added, “What makes this happen [with the mobile platform] is that the dashboards are easy to see. Doctors can see all of the metrics in the palm of their hand. I really think this is going to help doctors stay closer to their performance.”

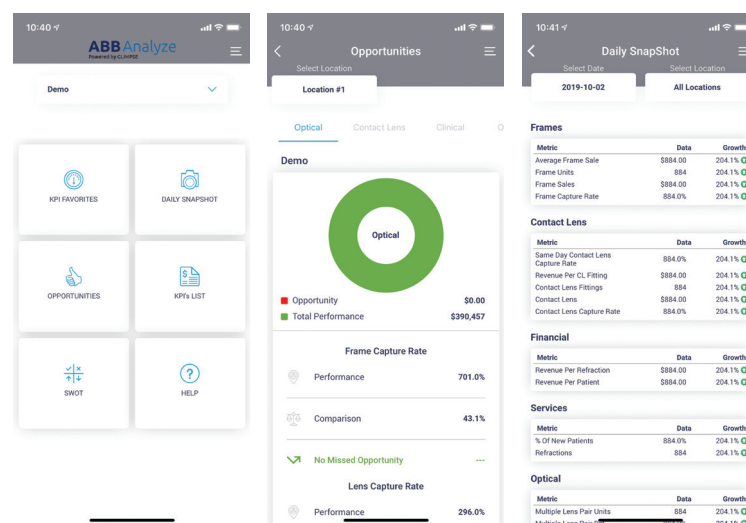
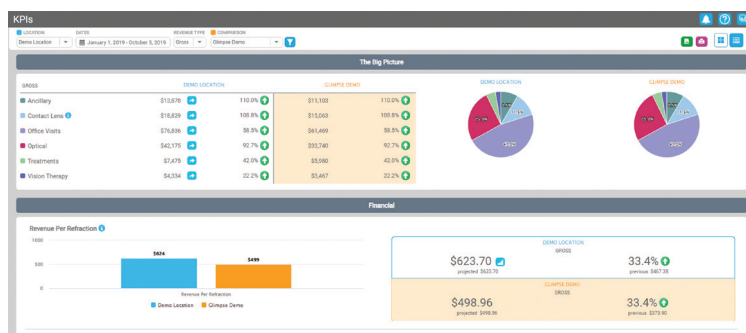
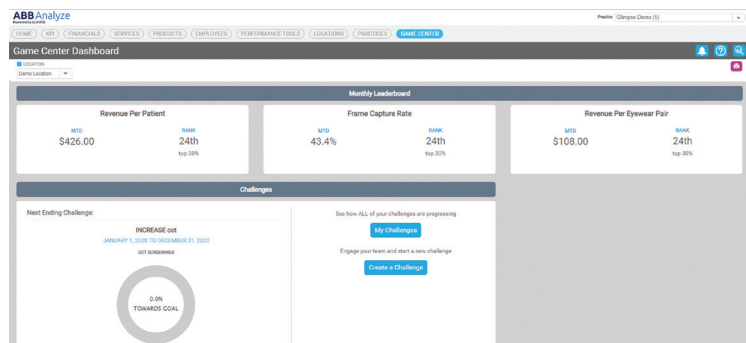


ABB Analyze has introduced new reports for ODs.

Jurens said that while all practices do some type of measurement, there’s a smaller percentage that really looks at the data in a meaningful way. “What I love about dashboards in general is that they can provide a variety of data points that are really critical to the practice. And they have no bias. You can’t toggle the [data points] up or down,” she said. “They are completely unbiased metrics and they are available to the entire staff.”

Added Hedberg, “Data can be intimidating. Sometimes when doctors look

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at the data, they fear what they don't understand. And they don't know how to interpret the data or they don't feel they have the time to really analyze it. ... The cool thing about Glimpse is that it simplifies the whole process. It makes it clear what's going well, and what's not going well."

Separately, ABB has introduced ABB Verify, powered by AffinityAnalytics, a benefits optimization platform. ABB Verify drives patients to return to an ECP's practice and maximizes patients' in-network vision care benefits, ABB said. It also allows a practice to reach out to patients (who have exam and/or material benefits remaining) via email, text message or voice recording.

EDGEPro by GPN Technologies

A Customizable Home Page Feature

GPN Technologies announced a round of new features and upgrades to its EDGEPro dashboard ahead of the Vision Expo West conference. The enhancements have been added, in part, due to users' recommendations and feedback about customization tools, according to GPN co-founder and chief operating officer Evan Kestenbaum. As a result, the EDGEPro homepage is now fully customizable.

One of the unique things about the customizable home page is that there are two versions, he added. One is for a single-practice owner who wants to review performance in a comparable format, and another version is designed for consulting-type organizations, private equity management groups or other enterprises that own multiple locations who are seeking a more sophisticated view of the data.

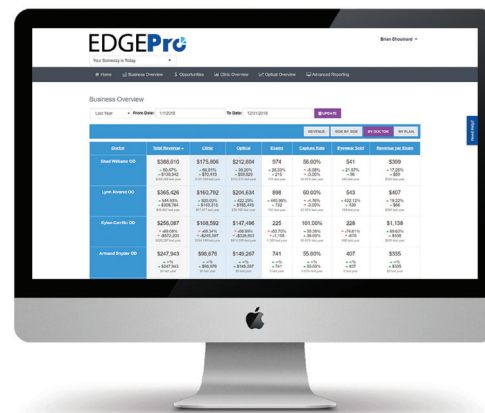


Ed Buffington

Evan Kestenbaum

Private equity-led management groups, and others, are using EDGEPro as a tool to help "normalize the data" as they review opportunities across practices using different practice management software systems, added C. Edward Buffington, president and chief executive at GPN. "What EDGEPro does is normalize the data across all of the different systems so they can have a 'common' view of the data."

Other new features of the EDGEPro dashboard are a new tracking metric (capture rate, which shows potential revenue gains and current trends) and a goal-setting feature. The goal-setting, or "opportunities" feature, allows a practice to view the potential new revenue tied to hitting certain goals. In order to do this, a practice first identifies what the most valuable opportunities are, and a second step involves identifying office selling "superstars" in a way that can lead to helping lift overall performance, Kestenbaum explained.



The EDGEPro homepage is now fully customizable.

A third addition to EDGEPro was an update to the industry benchmarking tools to include national data, a result of the many thousands of users who are reporting data.

The EDGEPro dashboard is built upon the concept of "understanding the story of the business and finding the new opportunities," while taking out the emotional-driven aspect.

An important factor in the successful use of a dashboard's reports is whether the practice owner shares the results with key staff members. "In practices that are highly successful, the doctor-owner shares data with the practice manager or the optician so that they can act on the data and produce results," Buffington said.

In the past five years, GPN has observed that many more doctors are moving to a data-sharing approach with their staff in order to improve performance, according to Kestenbaum. "One thing that separates us from any other analytics or practice management system is that [EDGEPro] goes from a consulting and operating perspective. What does the practice actually need to improve from where they are? A number is just a number unless you know how you use it."

Regardless of where a practice (or practice owner) sits on the business cycle continuum, and when they might consider a sale, they still need the data a dashboard provides so they can fully understand what's going on in the practice and where the new opportunities are, added Buffington.

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Eyefinity

Adds a Self-Service Data Explorer

It's been a busy year for the Eyefinity practice management software team. Over the past year, Eyefinity has launched new resources for its users, including a clinical analytics dashboard that was introduced in March, as well as several other new features and upgrades. The new clinical dashboard provides a set of pre-defined dashboards and reports that enable an ECP to drill down from the practice level to the provider level, and even the patient level, to look at clinical and operational data and metrics, as well as data related to ocular health, according to Eyefinity's vice president and chief operations officer Charlie Biegel.

Eyefinity, a leader in practice management and electronic health record software, operates under the VSP Global corporate umbrella.

Another unique element is Eyefinity's addition of "a self-service data explorer" that gives practices the flexibility to explore raw data and answer specific questions, or build reports and visualizations across multiple dimensions, according to Biegel. These reports can be exported for further analysis.



Charlie Biegel

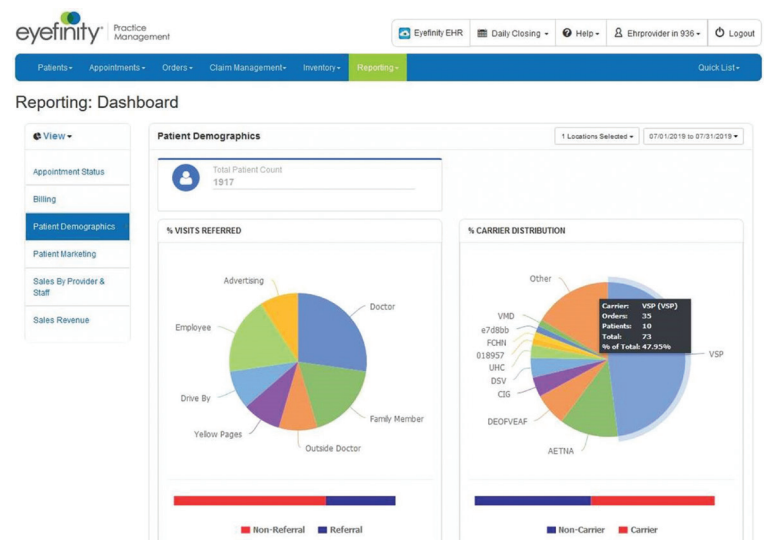
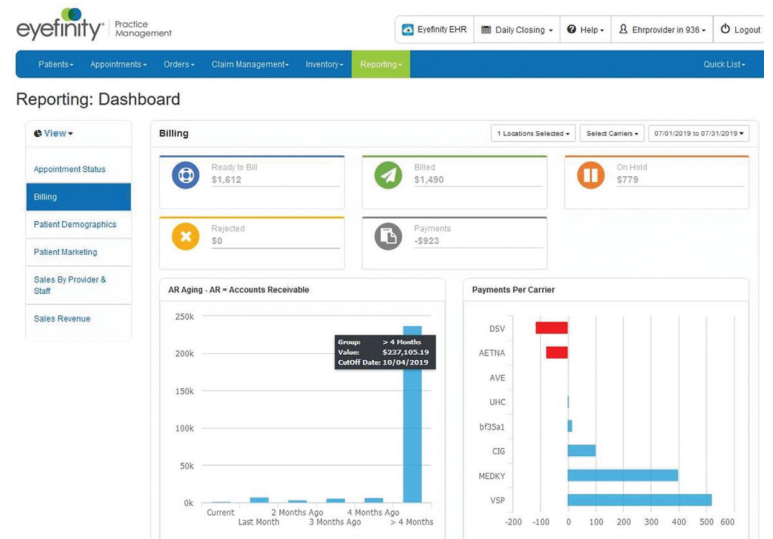
Most recently, Eyefinity launched a patient marketing dashboard at Vision Expo West. This dashboard allows practices to view and export patient information filtered along many different criteria, including insurance carrier and products purchased. The goal is to assist practices with the creation of targeted, data-driven marketing campaigns, Biegel said.

In addition, earlier this year Eyefinity added integration capabilities with GPN Technologies' EDGEPro dashboard (official launch date of May 1). GPN is now a certified partner. "Practices that enjoy the GPN experience from a dashboard reporting perspective can leverage that product with our suite of products seamlessly," Biegel said.

Eyefinity also is developing an optical sales capture rate dashboard, which may be introduced toward the end of this year or early in 2020, Biegel said. It will be part of the Eyefinity product suite.

Biegel noted that while dashboards are a useful resource and collect such important metrics as capture rate, revenue per patient, doctor utilization and/or inventory turn, there is a need for metrics that fit the "leading indicator" role for an ECP's practice.

"These [existing metrics] are all things that we recommend practices track, but they are all lagging indicators. They will tell you how healthy your practice is at a given point in time," he explained. "But the real challenge is [determining] what are the leading indicators that drive those lag



Eyefinity has added integration capabilities with EDGEPro.

indicators that practices can start measuring?" he said.

The challenge for the industry, with all of these lag indicators, is to determine what leading indicators can be tracked and used to drive different behaviors within the practice to affect a different outcome, Biegel said. The leading indicators are those measures that drive ECPs and their staff behavior.

For example, with capture rate if a practice lags its peers, what can be done to improve the measure? "Maybe capture rate is affected by the average time a patient is in the store and maybe the patient journey in your practice is too long," Biegel said. "The patient doesn't have enough time to shop for eyewear, so they are going elsewhere."

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HEA – Healthy Eyes Advantage User-Friendly SmartData Solution

In an effort to support its network of 10,000-plus independent ODs, MDs and opticians nationwide, Healthy Eyes Advantage (HEA) recently introduced SmartData Solution, a proprietary custom practice analytics dashboard that helps members monitor key performance indicators and maximize practice revenue. Two important elements of SmartData Solution are its user-friendliness and how easily it points to actionable items that can improve practice profitability, according to HEA.

HEA, which was formed in late 2017 through the combining of Block Buying Group, C&E Vision Services, HMI Buying Group, Red Tray Network, Club Zero and Vision West, said it is the “largest practice solutions network” in the nation. Its’ based in Boca Raton, Fla., and has offices in San Diego and Vicksburg, Miss.

SmartData is available to HEA members at no cost, and it works with members’ existing practice management software. No additional data entry is required to leverage the valuable analytics the dashboard delivers. SmartData was developed by GPN Technologies and is powered by EDGEPro, according to HEA. The SmartData Solution dashboard was designed to provide “easy access to immediate insights that lead to actionable intelligence,” HEA said.



Keith McAuliffe

Lorie Lippiatt, OD

Lorie Lippiatt, OD, owner of Salem Eyecare Center and HEA’s executive vice president of professional strategies, said, “Data analysis is absolutely critical to driving practice success in today’s competitive, ever more complex eyecare market. You can’t improve what you don’t measure.

Regular data analysis allows us to understand our bottom line better and to react faster to trends that call for improvement. It’s important that both the business owner and the staff are engaged with data analysis and that everyone in the practice works together to achieve growth goals.”

She added, “In my practice, we select one KPI each month and focus our efforts on improving that one metric. Once we demonstrate improvement in that measure, we move on to another, while still keeping an eye on previous actions taken to ensure their continued success.”

HEA’s SmartData Solution dashboard monitors four main KPIs: total exams, total revenue by type, revenue per exam and capture rate, as well as 15 additional optical-focused KPIs encompassing frames, lenses and contact lenses.

HEA’s Solution Pathways—introduced in July—focuses on five key practice



efficiency areas, including technology. The group “firmly believes that thoughtful data analysis leads to smarter decisions that improve patient outcomes, practice performance and workflow efficiency.”

Comparing data within a practice over time and with other practices are each important benchmarking approaches, and HEA’s SmartData Solution offers both. A practice’s year-over-year performance is provided for all KPIs, and a comparison to national averages is included for the crucial revenue per exam and capture rate measures. These benchmarking tools provide relevant context for astute decision-making, according to HEA.

Looking ahead, Keith McAuliffe, chief technology officer, said HEA is collaborating with many leaders in the health care industry. The intention is to find ways to improve patient insights and to “automate many repetitive and mundane tasks through the use of artificial intelligence (AI).” These areas include administration of practice functions to digital engagement with patients, he said.

IDOC

Insider Report Card Fills a Need

IDOC, founded in 1999, is a privately held consulting firm and alliance with a member base of more than 3,000 independent optometrists. In June, IDOC launched as a new feature to its IDOC Insider program a customized report card for members with GPN-compatible practice management systems.



Oliver Spadow

The new report card provides data-driven practice performance feedback in an easy-to-read dashboard format. (IDOC Insider, offered to members at no additional cost, rolled out last spring and combines data and sell-through analytics technology with customized, metrics-driven business recommendations and incentives based on individual practice data.)

The report card, in a monthly email format, displays clinical and optical revenue, sales volume by product type, performance benchmarks compared to participating IDOC member averages and other KPIs. IDOC practice management experts interpret the KPIs and then provide actionable next steps to help members identify and act on valuable market opportunities. “We’re super excited

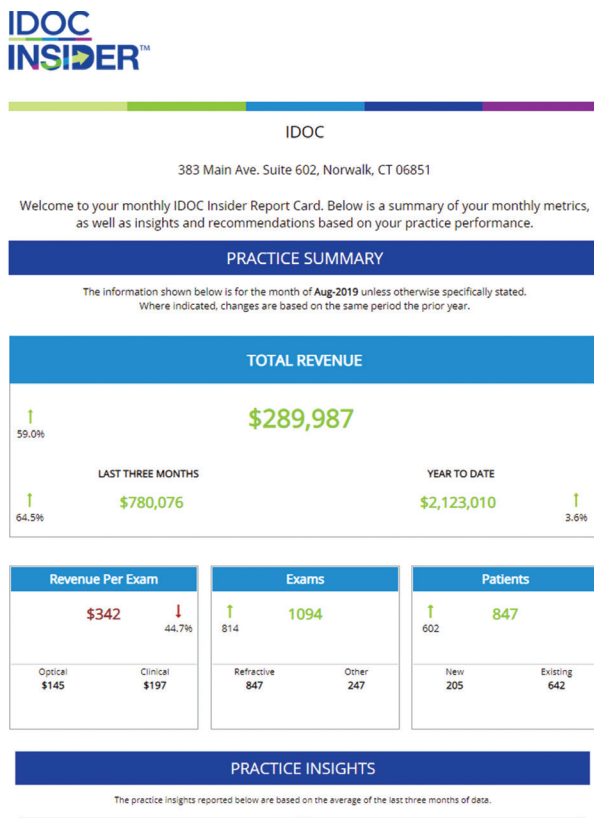
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about this. It's our No. 1 product launch of the year," IDOC director marketing Bridgette O'Brien told *Vision Monday*. "It basically gives members a deeper level of insight into their practice performance and practice-level data."

Looking ahead, O'Brien said IDOC sees opportunity to expand the Insider program. "We see the platform expanding and growing, and where we are working is to help [establish] partner opportunities with our vendors so that we can mutually grow the business for everybody, both our members and our vendor partners. We want to be able to pinpoint areas of opportunities in a practice where our members can grow, and then bring in our vendor partners to provide specific promotions to help drive that business. That's something that we are building out."



A sample IDOC Insider Report Card.

While there certainly is a mountain of data collected in the overall retail business today, there isn't as much—or it isn't aggregated in the same way—across the independent eyecare sector. But if alliances such as IDOC are going to provide recommendations to members by digging deeper into this data, new tools are required, according to Oliver Spandow, executive vice president and chief financial officer at IDOC.

"The data from retail is really quite good across various retailers, particu-

larly the large companies," he said. "But the consumption, or usage data from independent practitioners is [not as good], both at a practice and an aggregate level. So we worked to develop a tool with GPN that would provide more doctors the ability to look at practice snapshots, and for us to be in a better position to help them."

This led to the creation of an IDOC-specific version of GPN's EDGEPro dashboard (via a partnership with GPN). "This started as a way to help every practitioner have access to metrics that help them understand how they are performing and to share with their staff," Spandow said. Subsequently, IDOC took this data and key benchmarks to come up with an algorithm across a host of metrics to identify for practices things that they do well, and the things they don't do well. "Our goal is to drive better outcomes with our members," he said.

This has led to the creation of customized content—such as education materials or commercial selling tips—that is designed to help practices address the areas of opportunity within their business. The next phase, Spandow said, is to create additional tools such as a promotion or unique product that will help the independent practice "move the needle" in specific areas needing to be addressed.

PECAA KPIs Open Up New Opportunities

PECAA, a doctor alliance group founded in 2006 by three independent ODs, offers members its SuccessTRACK Financial Performance and Benchmarking Program (via ABB Analyze, powered by Glimpse).



Tyler Judkins

The SuccessTRACK benchmarking program includes exclusive production tracking software (powered by ABB Analyze). This comprehensive system provides invaluable data for practices that want to analyze performance quickly and efficiently, according to PECAA. SuccessTRACK helps instantly measure and track all aspects of practice performance, highlight growth opportunities, identify unresolved billing issues, forecast future trends and anonymously compare your benchmarks among peers.

For most ECP practices, "a whole new world will open up" if the practice decides to implement measurements known as key performance indicators (KPIs), according to PECAA business and financial advisor Tyler Judkins. "Running your business without measuring KPIs is akin to playing a game of basketball without keeping score, or baking a cake without a recipe," he explained. "Under these circumstances, you would have no way of knowing what is going on or what to do next. How many points do we need to win the game? What temperature does the oven need to be set at?"

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KPIs are tools that can easily be used to, first, measure a practice against its peers and, secondly, measure a practice against its own historical KPIs. “As a consultant to ODs, one common thread that I have observed among the thriving practices is that the owner knows his/her numbers and they take the time to analyze their KPIs,” Judkins said. “Which KPIs should you track? There is no dearth of KPIs to choose from. You need to decide what direction you want to take your practice and then, based on that, which KPIs will help you to get there?”

Among the most commonly tracked KPIs are: capture rate (including lens, frame, and contact lens), revenue per patient, revenue per refraction, percentage of new patients and revenue per contact lens fitting.

“At the end of the day, it is important to remember that, if you don’t measure it, you can’t improve it,” Judkins said.

RevolutionEHR

Pulse Dashboard Focuses on Accessibility

A lot of practice-level data is collected by ECPs, but before this data can be reviewed and used to improve performance it must be distilled into an accessible and easy-to-understand format. This is where the Pulse dashboard from RevolutionEHR fits into the picture, according to Brett Paepke, OD, director of eyecare professional services.



Brett Paepke, OD

Pulse, launched in early 2018, was developed to provide data analytics and a robust view of practice data. “It’s meant to give the user a quick view into the important practice performance metrics,” said Paepke, who practices in Plattsburgh, N.Y. He noted that ease of access to the data is perhaps the most critical piece of the dashboard, or platform, puzzle. “You can look across all of the different EHRs and the data, of course, is in there. But sometimes trying to get that data out can be a little bit more of a challenge and that’s where

Pulse tries to come in.”

A key differentiator for the Pulse platform is that there is no set-up, Paepke said. Pulse is meant to be a quick view into the analytics of the practice without requiring the ECP “to cobble together a bunch of stuff on their own,” he added. “If you want to go beyond that, then that’s where our partners come in and help you drill down even further into the data.”

One aspect of Pulse that RevolutionEHR has emphasized this year is the fact Pulse allows the practice owner or manager to create a customized dashboard utilizing the metrics collected in the platform. “Rather than me needing to go into the optical section to see what my eyeglass capture rate is, and then jump to the schedule section to see what my production book looks like,



The Pulse dashboard is designed for ease of use.

I can create a dashboard of just those important metrics for myself,” Paepke said. “I can click into Pulse and all of the things that I consider to be more important to my practice are available there.”

Coding is one area where RevolutionEHR believes it can help practitioners capitalize on the data they capture and review. For example, Paepke said, RevolutionEHR looks at a statistic in Pulse called the 99214-to-99213 ratio (a CPT code that applies to claims). “It’s not based on the premise that there is a right number for anybody, but what it is based on is the fact that we know from our data that about one-third of all encounters that optometrists provide are actually under-coded,” he said. “They are selecting a code that is below what the medical record would support for that exam.”

By aligning the coding with norms across eyecare practices, it may result in recovering overlooked revenue opportunities.

Looking ahead, Paepke said he believes that dashboards may have a role to play in areas such as data registries related to treatment and disease. In light of the increasing prevalence of registries across health care (such as registries designed to capture treatment protocols for dry eye or other diseases), dashboards are likely to be a resource to explain and simplify the outcomes reporting for health care professionals, he said.

Registries are often based around the idea of comparing a practitioner’s data to their peers. The underlying concept being that if the data show a specific practitioner only documenting current medications from patients about 70 percent of the time, and the average OD is documenting 97 percent, the individual practitioner can see their shortfall.

Comparative data such as this is designed, in part, to harness competitive feelings among health care professionals, Paepke noted.



Vision Source

Better Understanding of Dashboard Metrics

Vision Source has been offering dashboard-type options to its members that enable them to get a better analysis of the Optical Dream and Essilor Experts programs. One of the recent updates at Vision Source is a new analysis, or report, that allows member practices to benchmark their performance against the Vision Source practice average for 15 different metrics, according to Maria Beard, senior director of strategic planning and analysis.



Maria Beard

“This is all part of a new program launched this year called, ‘Business of Optometry,’” she added. The intent is to help practices understand how to more effectively manage their finances and to help them manage their cash flow.

Vision Source, which was founded in 1991, is North America’s most extensive network and franchise organization with more than 4,500 optometrist participants.

As part of the new benchmarking program, Vision Source practices complete a survey that inputs their practice metrics into a larger data file, and then they receive via email a report that benchmarks their results from the survey against the Vision Source average and an industry average. The report, or dashboard, shows a comparison of several key metrics that are important in the successful operation of an eyecare practice.

“The objective of this entire program is not only to help [the practice] learn

how to better manage cash flow, but also to help them better understand the metrics and to identify the areas where they really need to focus on in their practice,” Beard said.

The features of this new benchmarking report have drawn significant interest from Vision Source members, Beard said. One popular feature is the practice’s percentile ranking within the Vision Source member universe and their percentile ranking across the industry.

Beard noted that once Vision Source practice owners attend one of the group’s Business of Optometry courses and become more adept at the financial side of the practice and better understand how to interpret the data, they typically have a greater appreciation for the key performance indicators (KPIs) reports they receive. “I don’t know if they see the [full] value in the data until they come to the course and they learn how to use it,” she added.

In addition, Vision Source is developing an updated dashboard for Frame Dream via a partnership with Essilor. The objective is to help practices get a better understanding of brand turns within the Frame Dream-managed assortment, and how the practice stacks up versus the industry in terms of inventory turns on the frame board. At a higher level, this dashboard helps the practice understand the brand turn in total and per brand, and it also helps illustrate the percentage breakdown on a male-to-female basis, she said. The dashboard also provides practices with a clearer sense of which colors, brands and/or SKUs are more popular with different demographic types.

Looking ahead, Beard said that Vision Source plans to add new features to the Business of Optometry program in the coming months. ■

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fort to track all of its operating data.

“Now, I check Glimpse every morning to see how we’re doing for the week, the month and the year,” she added. “It helps us set and meet goals, like increasing our frame capture rate or how many second-pair sales we are doing. It follows our contact lens sales so I can make sure that we’re selling year supplies of contacts.”

If the practice isn’t meeting its goals, Nevelow said she can review the refractions for that month and “decide if we need to send out extra recalls.”

At Nittany Eye Associates, the practice recently began using a new dashboard within its EHR to view the percentage of time a doctor is booked,

which doctors are seeing more new patients and which doctors are performing a higher percentage of medical exams, Cymbor said. This makes it easier to determine when a new optometrist should be hired and/or when a new piece of office equipment might be needed.

“In the past, we’ve often made decisions anecdotally,” Cymbor said. “Better metrics allow us to make better decisions.”

Perhaps one downside to the proliferation of data, CareCredit’s Baldwin said, is that it may be difficult to focus on the data that’s most important to a businesses’ success. “It starts with your own ‘small data,’ which is the data on your own patients,” he explained. “Your small data should

align with your key performance indicators (KPIs), such as new patient acquisition, capture rate, average ticket, referrals and retention, among others. You can then compare your performance with big data, so you can see where you excel and where there is opportunity for improvement.”

Baldwin added, “Harnessing the power of data to improve your KPIs and success is an ongoing process. Technology is enabling companies to capture so much more information, which means there’s always room to learn more. So, as we all become a bit savvier about accessing and using data, we need to realize that tomorrow new ways to even better understand customers is on the horizon.” ■