

WRAPPING UP 2008 • BY TONI BRISTOL

As an historic year is rapidly coming to a close, it is time to review how we did in 2008 and to plan for 2009. New Year's resolutions are around the corner so I would like to give you some ideas to consider.

For 2009, re-charge yourself. Read over some of the success stories your patients have written. Take the time to re-dedicate yourself to helping the people in your community overcome vision problems that are interfering with their daily lives and providing them with the best care possible.

If you haven't achieved fellowship or COVT certification in COVD yet, please take your next step on the road to certification. Look over your calendar and carve out the time to get it done in 2009. If you are having any difficulty taking your next step, please call the COVD office and let them know, so they can help you get back on track. COVD has fellowship and COVT committees dedicated to helping you succeed.

Plan to reach out to your colleagues and share the exciting news about vision therapy and the latest research. You should be the expert in binocular vision and vision therapy for your local optometric association. If you aren't already involved in your local association, please get involved.

When vision therapy is in the news, make sure your patients, colleagues and referral sources know about it. Send your colleagues and referral sources periodic letters keeping them up to

date. Inform your patients on the news through quarterly newsletters.

If you have not been tracking your case acceptance rate, please make sure you do in 2009. Your case acceptance rate can vary depending on whether the patient has insurance. Therefore you should start by determining what percent of your patients are insurance based vs. what percent are private pay. Then review your case acceptance rate for each category. Any patients who drop out early (for whatever reason) should be included with those who did not start.

If your case acceptance rate is lower than 75%, I would recommend improving this area before starting any large marketing efforts. If you haven't been keeping track of patients for whom you have recommended VT, your first step would be to put in a tracking system.

Now let's take a moment to dream. What would happen if you had just one more patient start therapy each week? Would you reach your goal by the end of the year? In other words, are you currently seeing enough patients so that, if all you did was increase your case acceptance rate you would reach your goals? If your answer is "yes," then your main priority should be to improve your case acceptance rate.

Most importantly, if you are not sure what to do, don't be afraid to ask for help. Depending on the depth of your situation your colleagues are usually

more than willing to help. For more in-depth cases, you need to contact a practice consultant.

I would like to wish you a very wonderful holiday season and all the best in 2009. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at ToniBristol@expansionconsultants.com.

For some ideas on how to get the word out during the holiday season, please be sure to go on line to the COVD website, members only area and review my article in *VISIONS* from last December for "The Top 5 Things to Do This Holiday Season."

Toni Bristol is an Affiliate Member of COVD and a Practice Management Consultant in Montrose, California.



During the COVD Annual Meeting Awards Luncheon, Dr. Fortenbacher presented Ms. Bristol with the President's Award in recognition of her many contributions to COVD.

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G.N. Getman Award
Carl G. Hillier, OD, FCOVD

COVT of the Year Award
Diann Geisert, COVT

President's Award
Toni Bristol

Best Article Award
John D. Tassinari, OD, FCOVD

Special Awards for Dedicated Service
W. C. Maples, OD, FCOVD
Linda Dejmek, OD, FCOVD
Drusilla Grant, OD, FCOVD
Ida Chung, OD, FCOVD
Dan Fortenbacher, OD, FCOVD

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