

# Achieve EPIC Success

Learn how the EPIC 5100 refraction system can elevate your practice to higher levels of success

BY KEVIN HENNE, OD

**I**t was 2015, and the success of our optometric practice — comprised of three opticians, two technicians, two administrative assistants, one insurance associate, and myself — in Winter Haven, Fla., was proving to be a double-edged sword. Although we welcomed the growth in patient volume — we were seeing 360 patients per month and climbing — we were steadily being forced to book patients a month or more in advance and were in serious need of a more systematic, streamlined, and logical approach to patient care.

Indeed, people don't want to wait for weeks on end to see their eye doctor. We needed a way to see patients far more efficiently without sacrificing the quality of our optometric examinations and treatments. I had already added one technician and was considering adding another; however, I abandoned that idea because it didn't effectively reduce patient wait times. I quickly realized that I was the real bottleneck in the system.

Also, after 35 years of practice, collecting routine data had become repetitious for me, and even painful. My back, shoulders, and rotator cuff were suffering from the aches and pains of the constant twisting and stress associated with manual, phoropter-based refractions.

Ultimately, I came to realize that I needed to change my entire system, not just add more staff. I had also become interested in aberrometry, but wasn't sure how to incorporate it into my daily routine. Now, faced with challenging circumstances and growing more comfortable

with the idea of making a significant change, I embarked on a search for an aberrometry system to expedite examinations, improve office efficiency, add aberrometry, and boost patient satisfaction.

In the course of my search, other optometrists pointed me toward Marco's renowned EPIC refraction system. They gave both the company and the technology extremely high marks in quality, service, and design. Working with Marco specialists, I learned that the EPIC workstation configured with the OPD Scan III integrated aberrometer would give me the ability to rapidly diagnose conditions affecting the entire optical pathway by defining the optical characteristics and pinpointing where aberrations were located through various pupil sizes. That, paired with a sophisticated digital refraction system capable of automated customized testing sequences would allow me to standardize the refractive testing collects.

The EPIC 5100 would then transfer all the results to my EMR, eliminating redundant data entry and the mistakes that can occur as a result. It would be the combination of rapid diagnoses, digital standardized refractions, and automated data transfer that would provide the efficiency I needed to eliminate me as the bottleneck. And, all of this could be done in a 6' x 6' area of the office. So, in August 2015, we took the plunge and acquired the EPIC 5100, the latest iteration of the refraction system.

## Faster, More Accurate Examinations

I'm pleased to report that the EPIC 5100 is greatly exceeding our expectations. I see patients of virtually all ages,



The EPIC Refraction System

ranging from just a few months to older than 100 years. Most can be efficiently and accurately examined with the EPIC 5100 system, starting at about age 5. In particular, I appreciate the digital refraction unit's ability to refract in daylight (no more dark office), as well as the split-prism feature, which is very easy for all patients, young and old, to understand. Redundant "Better 1 or 2" testing is eliminated with simultaneous presentation of the old and new prescriptions.

With the split prism for cylinder and axis determination, I utilize the EPIC's dot pattern instead of the traditional letters. Patients of all ages and cognitive levels find the dots very easy to respond to and can be examined more quickly with the dot pattern than with the letters. Many of my patients are both surprised and intrigued by the switch from letters to dots. They also appreciate the simultaneous presentation of the choices and more confidently and rapidly make their selection. The ability to determine the axis to the exact degree, rather than just within 2 to 3 degrees as with a standard manual refractor, also improves our outcomes and impresses our patients. While not part of the standard testing regimen, I appreciate the ease with which we can test distance fixation disparity, glare, and contrast all at the EPIC workstation without additional equipment or the need to move the patient.

In terms of diagnostic discernment, the EPIC 5100 can generate 20 diagnostic calculations in just 10 seconds with the OPD-Scan III, which helps to define the physiological optics of the eye and provides me with a better understanding of my patients' visual complaints and symptoms. The OPD component has brought the higher-order aberrations into a whole new light (pun intended). Because it is integrated aberrometry, registered along the center of the optical pathway with the other testing provided by the system, the OPD-Scan III allows me to rapidly diagnose the entire optical pathway in ways I never could before.

### Improved Satisfaction and Efficiency

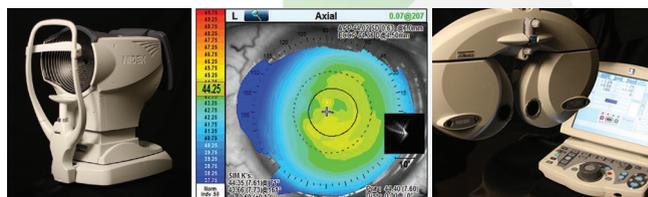
In addition to improving the quality of our examinations, the EPIC 5100 has greatly increased the efficiency of our patient throughput. We previously examined about 360 patients per month, and now we comfortably handle about 500 patients per month, with the same compliment of staff.

Our staff also loves working with the EPIC 5100. At first, they were concerned and didn't fully understand why I was installing the technology. But once trained on the system,

they became excited. We have changed our workflow with respect to the specific order of tests, but there is nothing like a little change to drive improvement.

Using the EPIC 5100, my technicians follow a standard sequence to collect the data I need to provide thorough, comprehensive, high-quality care without the physical and mental fatigue associated with traditional manual examinations. I now see five to seven more patients each day than I used to, with much less physical effort, and, after 35 years of reaching for the phoropter, twisting, and straining my back and rotator cuff, I feel great relief. Indeed, my repetitive stress-related pain has virtually disappeared. I even look forward to Monday mornings again.

What's more, patients appreciate the new system and often comment on it. I can cite many cases where a friend or spouse of a patient has booked an appointment after seeing the EPIC 5100 in action.



The OPD-Scan III and TRS-5100 are integrated into the EPIC workstation.

### Cost-effective Solution with "Wow" Factor

In terms of financial impact on our practice, I estimate it takes one extra patient per day to cover the cost of the EPIC 5100, and we far exceed that goal. Indeed, from a purely financial perspective, the system thus far has been a boon to our practice. Add to that the system's positive impact on my health, the enhanced quality of examinations, the improved staff engagement, and the "wow" factor for patients, and the result is a clear win-win-win for me, my staff, and my patients alike.

The EPIC 5100 is an invaluable tool that enables optometrists to get more information in less time, and ultimately enables them to provide higher-quality patient care to more patients. 🌟

Dr. Henne has been in private practice in Winter Haven, Fla., since 1981.