

## **Marketing Tips on the Reopening of the Practice After a Temporary Closure due to Covid-19**

### **What to Do Now**

Before you fully reopen the practice, think through the questions your patients may have before they book their eye exam:

- Are you fully operational? All services?
- Can you work with me if I have lost my job and benefits (insurance and vision plan)?
- Is it safe to visit the practice?
- Are there any new requirements for patients for safety?

Outline the new safety protocol you are going to implement, for both staff and patients, and consider how you will accommodate people who no longer have insurance or a vision plan. (private pay discount, Care Credit, etc.)

### **Social Media Tips**

- Thank your patients and community for supporting you during this time on your social media channels. People are more invested than ever in their local community.
- Consider promoting other small businesses in your area on social media. Those business owners will not soon forget your kindness during this time.
- Stay in touch with patients by providing personal updates – videos with at home eye care tips will work well.
- Let people know they may still access care for emergencies and that they can buy contact lenses from you.

### **What to Do When You Know the Date of Your Practice Reopening**

When you know the date your practice will reopen, it is ideal to begin communicating with patients two weeks in advance of reopening day. You may consider keeping your schedule light the first week to give your staff time to adjust to new processes.

Use all your communication channels to let your patients know the date you are fully reopen and that you are now scheduling appointments.

**Phone calls:** Reach out to patients with cancelled appointments due to the temporary closure so that they may re-book their exam. Be prepared to talk about your new safety protocol and outline any new requirements you have for patients. Do not assume but be prepared to address their concerns if they have lost their insurance and vision plan due to a layoff.

Dr. Kris May, an IDOC IMD, suggested contacting high priority medical patients and any other patients deemed “high value” to the practice on the phone as well.

**Marketing Email** (through a patient relationship management platform): Let all your patients know when you are coming back in advance, and how they can book an appointment. Most platforms have email campaigns designed for your reopening.

**Website:** Consider creating a special announcement or a separate link on your website outlining the new safety protocol in place at the practice. You can then link to the page on your website in all other communication for those patients who wish to review it before booking an appointment.

**Social Media:** Let people know the date you are fully reopening, and then let them know you are fully reopened on opening day.

### **Marketing Tips After You Have Reopened the Practice**

Marketing and communication during the week of reopening depends on whether you were able to fill the schedule in the two weeks prior. Your first week back should be a bit light, as staff may be “rusty” and all of you will need to adjust to new safety protocol, less patients seen per hour for social distancing reasons, perhaps longer hours in the day.

### **Eyecare is healthcare.**

Consider sharing educational materials on the comprehensive eye exam. Most of us are health-conscious and health-minded right now. The annual comprehensive eye exam is important and should be a priority. Eyecare is healthcare.

### **Social Media:**

- Try using a “cautiously optimistic” tone in your social media posts. No need to use literal images of people in face masks as most people understand that businesses are making new accommodations, and in fact, many are skeptical of businesses which appear to be using the virus as a marketing ploy.
- Let patients know that you have missed them, and that you look forward to seeing them at the practice.
- Thank patients and the community for their support of their locally owned optometry practice.
- Share educational posts on the comprehensive eye exam and how you can spot the warning signs of high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.
- Update your followers on safety protocol, but again, no need to be overly literal or fearful with the images. You can link to the safety protocol page on your website for those who may wish to review it.