

“The acceptance rate increased because...our belief in the technology and the process changed.”

Aaron Werner, OD



Practice Information

- Werner Optometry– El Cajon, CA
- Two OD, private practice

Reason for Purchase

- Technological innovation
- Clinical decision making
- Improved patient care

Aaron Werner, OD, was still in high school when his father, Rex Werner, OD, brought the first **optomap** retinal imaging equipment into Werner Optometry in El Cajon, California. The son was working as a tech in the practice at the time, and encouraging patients to have an **optomap** image of the retina captured has been part of the process at the practice for years. Through a unique approach, Dr. Werner encouraged his staff to portray **optomap** in terms of clinical information instead of focusing on the cost. They became more comfortable with it and changed the way they discussed it. Dr. Werner says that lasting change has to come from self-motivation. “Whenever we want to bring change to the practice, I reference this experience. I tell staff that the acceptance rate didn’t increase because patients suddenly decided to have the elective exam, but, rather, our belief in the technology and the process changed.”

Over the years, the staff and doctors have had plenty of opportunities to see the value of **optomap**. “Not only have we seen the more typical cases of diabetes and diabetic retinopathy, but we’ve also found other peripheral pathology. For example, one patient had a small retinal tear in an eye with a large retinoschisis in the opposite quadrant. I might well have seen both with just a dilated exam, but I also may have missed the tear if my focus was on the schisis,” he says, noting that the patient’s cooperation, comfort or other factors could have contributed to not noticing the smaller tear. One of the most uncommon cases was of torpedo maculopathy in an infant - on 3:30 on a Wednesday afternoon which was something the doctor was able to immediately send to retina. Being able to share such a high level of detail with retina surgeons has made surgeons and patients happy. “We can quickly discuss the best plan of action for the patient, and if a patient is going directly into surgery, both the patient and surgeon can prepare. Patients appreciate that we have a plan.” Indeed, Dr. Werner says that having enhanced the relationship between a new local retinal surgeon has helped us show some of our peers in eyecare that we’re not just talking about eyeglasses and contact lenses. Now our regional website is his Rolodex for referrals.”

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