

May Eye Care Center stands alone with new advancement in Laser Eye Surgery

by Kathy Pavoncello
for the Evening Sun

As in any healthcare profession, the advancement of technology is tantamount to the success of the practice, and is essential for patient health and recovery. Ophthalmology is no different, as Dr. Carl J. May, owner of May Eye Care Center and Associates can testify. He has a thriving practice in Hanover and York, and there are hundreds of patients out there who have come to see the truth in this belief.

"That's one of the things about our office," boasts Dr. May. "We stay on the cutting edge of technology for refractive and cataract surgery." He has led a distinguished career over the last ten years, and has become a leader in the field of ophthalmic surgery. Cataract and refractive surgery are his specialties, and he has mastered the art of LASIK (Laser In-Situ Keratomileusis) surgery as well, having more experience in LASIK surgery than anyone in Central Pennsylvania. As a board-certified surgeon by the American Board of Ophthalmology, Dr. May was the first to introduce many new state-of-the-art techniques to Central Pennsylvania, including the Wavefront or WaveScan technology, and the VISX Star S4. He is currently the only doctor who provides this technology, and that allows him to stand out from the others in his field.

Dr. May understands that the use of these new procedures and equipment is an unequivocal enhancement to the lives of his patients. As Practice Administrator and manager, Stephanie Baumgardner has seen the emotional results of Dr. May's handiwork. Many patients, particularly the elderly, have an innate fear of losing their sight. "Patients are amazed at what they can see after cataract surgery. Some never realized how poor their vision was prior to surgery." "What's rewarding is...the LASIK patients...I mean, we've just had them jump up and down and scream. They're just so excited because they never could be in a position of being without their glasses because they literally could not see. It's just really rewarding."

LASIK surgery involves creating and pulling back a flap of corneal tissue, allowing the vaporization of small amounts of cells, thus reshaping the cornea when the flap is replaced. The patient feels nothing, and the procedure time is minimal (about 20 minutes). Wavefront or WaveScan technology allows the doctor to use the system to take a "fingerprint" of the eye, which in turn

enables him to customize the laser to match the patient's eye.

The innovative VISX Star S4 Laser is a new addition to his vast array of medical equipment. It has the most advanced software and state-of-the-art 3-D eye tracking system available. This system provides more flexibility and precision in laser vision correction, including Variable Spot Scanning, which uses variable size and shape beams with scanning capabilities. This flexibility enables more treatments for myopic, astigmatic and hyperopic patients. The VISX Star S4 allows Dr. May to track a patient's eye movement in all three dimensions during the treatment, allowing more control and therefore alleviating yet one more aversion a patient might have to the possibility of laser eye surgery. According to Dr. May, "We can do it in a limited way right now. It's about to be approved by the FDA in June or July. We are the only ones in Central PA that have this technology."

In regard to the training offered to his employees, he says that "most of the people we have are trained from within," either by himself, or through other professional means. He claims that he has "one of the best staffs." He enjoys getting the personnel acquainted with new procedures, and new technological advances. According to his team, he gets as excited as a child with a new toy, and he wants to share his newfound knowledge.

This brings us to the staff itself. Although they were all interviewed separately, their voices came together as a chorus in praise of Dr. May's enthusiasm for learning and involvement, as well as its eventual benefits to the clientele. As Stephanie Baumgardner says, "[Dr. May] is such a good guy to work for. He loves to share, he loves to educate, he loves to pull you along with him. He gets everyone involved with what he's doing, and we just all roll along as a team, which is absolutely wonderful. We have 7 girls and everyone gets along. We're like one big family."

Maria Lawrence, receptionist and "Scheduling Guru", as she's referred to, concurs. Dr. May's educational technique is "hands-on. He brings you right in," anytime he sees something he thinks might be a new experience for them. "It's pretty awesome. It's just the way he involves you in everything." Because of their comfort in knowledge, and the ability to have patients' questions answered, "Everyone is warm and friendly and accommodating to [the patients]." She basically sums her feelings up this

way. "He gives you such an opportunity to learn and grow in here as an employee. It's a very interesting line of work."

Corinna Hansford is the LASIK and Cataract Coordinator at May Eye Care. She explains that prior to LASIK surgery, informational videos and consultation are key to the education of patients, especially those who may have certain concerns about a procedure they're about to undergo. She says that a typical progression of a patient's care in their office is as such: first, information; second, evaluation of a patient's needs, and discussion of pre and post-surgical procedures; and thirdly, the surgery itself. Of course, follow-up visits would be scheduled until the doctor is satisfied that everything is acceptable. May Eye Care Center has numerous books and pamphlets that are given to the patients prior to any procedure. As the Surgery Coordinator, she keeps in close contact all the way through the course. "We like to educate people here. Education is a key factor." In respect to Dr. May, she adds that, "He allows everyone to expand their knowledge, and pass it on to their patients."

Hansford relates that there are a lot of people who tend to sit on the proverbial fence, so to speak, about whether or not to go through with surgery, no matter what kind it is, but particularly eye surgery. "You'd be amazed how many people come in here who've had problems for years and years. A lot of them, they're scared because they don't know too much about it, and when you educate, you give them information, whether it's verbally or a hand-out and they read a little bit about it," giving them the courage and understanding needed to make the right decision. This is one area in which Corinna feels Dr. May shines. "Dr. May's really good at talking with patients, and letting them know step-by-step what would take place. I really think educating people is a real big plus." She's very proud of the amount of information they provide for their patients.

"With LASIK, and with cataract, you're going to have someone who has a lot of different emotions. Every time I talk to someone who's interested in having LASIK, they have a million different emotions that they're going through, even the day of surgery. They're excited because they wore glasses ever since they were so small, but they have that fear, 'these are my eyes, what am I doing?'" She feels that she is always learning as well, on a daily basis, either by personal experience from a member of their clientele, or by reading one of



the many articles, or print-outs, or examples of new technology that Dr. May is so fond of supplying to his staff. "Technology is so advanced these days, and Dr. May is one of those guys who just loves to learn, and he gives us the feedback. I really like that, and I like to learn, too! I don't know what it would be like somewhere else...I don't know that all doctors are like that. He's learning, and then he passes [the knowledge] on to us, which I think is super, because then we can pass it on to our patients."

Deb Rickrode, Medical Scribe, describes her job as following in all his footsteps. She spends her working hours documenting every thing that happens between doctor and patient – what medications are prescribed, patient's described medical problems, and every phone call.

Apparently, she feels the same way everyone else does on the staff regarding Dr. May and his quest for education and new information. "Everyone always wants to learn more, and he loves teaching it. That's one of the things I love about the job. It's not boring." She enjoys the idea of learning on the job, but she is quick to explain that she and the other employees are not the only ones who benefit from the good doctor's educational generosity. "It's not just with us, he's that way with the patients as well." She goes on to say that in general, the better they understand their problem, the better they can understand the reasons behind decisions he makes regarding their recovery.

"Sometimes with the older population, they're afraid to ask questions – they get frustrated." Dr. May's approach to this is a full explanation of the reasons for their vision problem, and also what can be done to remedy the situation. They know why they're being prescribed certain medications, eye drops, etc. One of her jobs, especially if the patient has been prescribed multiple medications, is to supply a print-out of instructions, to remind them when to take the medication, what precautions should be taken, and drug interaction information. "I think the practice, as a whole, is very much about keeping the patient informed. We go above and beyond to help the patient out. When you work here, you've got to be willing to improve. He's always into new techniques, anything that's going to improve the quality of what he does." She says that one of his favorite sayings is, "You know that's in a constant state of change", and that seems to be the general perception at May Eye Care, as well as the

entire field. "It's always changing, and always for the good." She feels that having an amiable group of people working together really makes a difference, also. She describes the working relationship between each member of the staff as "working machinery." She says that they all try to provide as pleasant an experience as possible, and extending common courtesy, which is the right of the patient to receive.

Tammy Rife is an Ophthalmic Technician at May Eye Care Center. Her duties include 'prepping' the patient for the doctor, conducting certain parts of the exam, and any required patient testing prior to being seen by the doctor. She checks vision, takes measurements (of the eye), alters refractions, among other things.

When asked about what she considers to be the benefits of working at May Eye Care Center, she had a lot to say – especially regarding the people and the equipment. "The people I work with are very nice, the job is never dull. I love using the equipment. Everything is so much easier to use in this office. It's all very quick and efficient. It's very high-tech, I think. I don't think I've ever been in another place that is as high-tech as it is here. Everything was computerized two years ago." She has come to appreciate the opportunities for learning. She mentions such educational tools as state-of-the-art computers, and even a 'teaching microscope'. This special piece of equipment enables the "student" to be able to see exactly what Dr. May is seeing during an examination. Although she is actually a certified LPN, she has had other types of training, as well as hands-on experience with any new equipment to enter the office. About the staff, she relates to them like family. She says that she spends more time with her coworkers than she does with her own family.

Trina Downey has worked for two years at this location as a receptionist, and she has found that, despite the simple title she carries, her job could be described as a cross-training event. Although she works in tandem with Maria at the front desk, she has been able to get a taste of another aspect of the medical field. Every Thursday, she scribes for Dr. Stutman, the optometrist who recently joined the thriving practice. She becomes his shadow, and records his interaction with his own patients. She has found this to be a rewarding experience.

Because of the ability for the employees to learn as much as they do, and dabble in other

areas of expertise on occasion, Downey feels that the public should know that the staff is fairly well-rounded. She remarks that Dr. May has a reputation that stands alone, and Dr. Stutman is quickly developing a solid reputation in the Hanover community, as well.

Dr. Robert Stutman, OD, FAAO, divides his time between being a part-time optometrist in private practice, and working with optometry students at the Baltimore VA Medical Center. He currently serves as a member of the Quality Enhancement and Improvement Committee of the Maryland state board of optometry. He also serves as the chair of the Legislative Committee for the Maryland Optometric Association. Dr. Stutman has been published in highly respected optometric journals and has lectured to doctors of optometry nationally.

Dr. May and his staff of talented workers and peers are looking forward to the opening of the new Hillside Medical Center in Penn Township. This 80,000 square foot complex will contain individual suites, offering a wide range of medical expertise. It has been described as "one-stop shopping" in relation to comprehensive medical care. May and his staff are preparing for the two-mile relocation upon the complex's completion, scheduled for July 18th, 2003. As result of this upcoming office transfer, LASIK surgery will be obtainable in both York and Hanover. The new complex will include a suite specifically designed to accommodate laser surgery.

Despite May's demanding schedule, he still has found time to author a book about corrective eye surgery, and is currently working on yet another publication on the technological breakthroughs in eye surgery.

Currently, eye examinations are conducted at the Hanover office, located inside the Eichelberger Professional Building on Stock Street, Suite 310. LASIK and cataract examinations and surgical procedures are performed at Dr. May's office on White Street in York.

With the combination of ever-changing technological advancement, a perpetually educated staff of dedicated employees, and a source of information and compassion towards its patients, May Eye Care Center is constantly looking forward to the vision of future.

If you are interested in more information about Dr. May, or May Eye Care Center, please call the Hanover office at (717) 637-1919, or visit the center's website at www.mayeyecare.com.



Evening Sun photos by Kathy Pavoncello