

the LIGHT PIPE



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THE NEWSLETTER OF



GEORGIA RETINA

If Georgia Retina does not have your current email on file, please go to garetina.com/light-pipe-newsletter and fill out the form or call us at 404-255-9096.

Practice News

Practice News: The COVID Pandemic

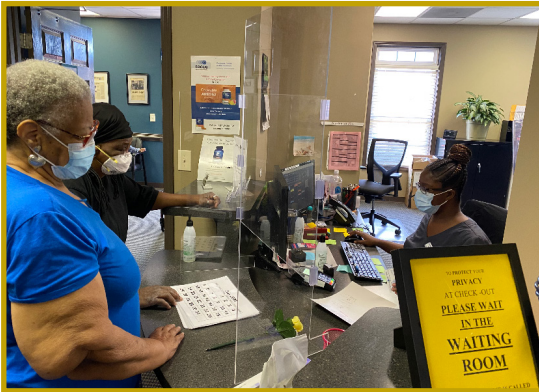
We at Georgia Retina certainly hope that all of you have stayed safe and healthy through this COVID pandemic. Certainly, this has been uncharted territory. It's hard to imagine anyone saw this coming or expected what the impact would be. Things are changing at a rapid pace and hopefully by the time of this publication, there is some sense of normalcy returning to your practices. Our incredible eyecare community will get through this together.

Like everyone else, we sure wish we had a playbook handy to detail how to perfectly manage it. At Georgia Retina, we remained open and dedicated to providing essential retinal care to your patients. Some of the steps that Georgia Retina took, and continues to take, to mitigate the impact include:

- Developing a proactive plan and communicating with our staff at every office on a daily basis
- Rescheduling all non-urgent and non-essential visits. These generally included long-term follow-up visits
- Rescheduling appointments for patients who have respiratory infection, fever, or recent travel out of the United States
- Requesting that patients with fever or symptoms not enter the office and call prior to their visit
- All staff or team members are asked to stay out of work if they had fever or symptoms
- Moving essential and urgent appointments to a morning clinic to allow closure in the afternoon to reduce the hours of interpersonal contact as well as expenditures
- Cleaning and disinfecting all equipment and surfaces (exam chairs, slit lamps, fundus lenses etc.) after patient use
- Equipping each slit lamp with a slit lamp protector
- Cleaning and disinfecting all high touch points (doorknobs, etc.) regularly throughout the day
- Reorganizing our waiting areas to accommodate social distancing guidelines and removing all magazines

- Requiring all doctors, staff, patients, and others in clinic to wear PPE the entire duration of being in the office
- Encouraging preventative measures such as hand washing with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, using alcohol-based hand sanitizers, avoiding touching of eyes, nose, and mouth
- Limiting patient companions to only those necessary for patient care and asking family members and companions to wait in their cars
- Enforcing social distancing for patients in common areas such as check-in and waiting room
- Setting up answering service for earlier hours and ensuring our doctors are able to be reached directly for emergencies
- Monitoring no-show rates, oftentimes which were staggeringly high, to determine how many patients to schedule each half day
- Communicating through social media, appointment reminders, text messaging

Thank you again for your trust in Georgia Retina. If you have any further suggestions, comments, or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We would love to hear from you. We appreciate the privilege of participating in your patients' care and we sincerely hope everyone will be back at full strength in the very near future.



Practice News: Georgia Retina Clinical Research Department

Georgia Retina is proud to have a pre-eminent Clinical Research Department that is very active in cutting edge research programs. In 2019, Georgia Retina's Clinical Research Department had quite a growth spurt as we continued to expand the Clinical Research Department. Georgia Retina is currently conducting 15 studies on indications including Age-Related Macular Degeneration (Exudative and Non-Exudative), Central Retinal Vein Occlusion, and Diabetic Macular Edema. Please refer to the "Study Update" section for additional details. These clinical trials vary in length and range from observational trials to interventional trials involving devices or new medications. In order to provide our patients and sponsors with the best possible care, we added more research staff and a separate 2019 square foot suite for the Clinical Research Department adjacent to the clinic suite at our Marietta location. The Clinical Research suite includes workspaces for Clinical Research Coordinators, a certified ETDRS Visual Acuity Lane, two private rooms for Clinical Research Monitors and consenting, a securely locked storage room for Investigational Products, a laboratory, a laboratory supply storage room, a conference space, and a small waiting room. We are excited to use this new space to continue conducting our trials as efficiently, safely, and ethically as possible.





Study Update

Georgia Retina has a long tradition of commitment to and participation in clinical trials in order to provide our patients access to new, state-of-the-art preventative, or therapeutic treatments. We partner with the National Eye Institute, some of the nation's top pharmaceutical companies, and other clinical practices to explore the causes and cures for many retinal conditions.

We take special care to ensure that our study patients experience the best medical care possible. This past year we have been active in 10 clinical trials for wet age-related macular degeneration, geographic atrophy secondary to dry age-related macular degeneration, retinal vein occlusion, diabetic macular edema, and non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy.

We hope that as you consider where to refer your patients for retinal care, you will keep in mind that Georgia Retina not only provides exception care but can also offer your patients the opportunity to enroll in clinical trials thereby offering them new vision saving treatments. If you have any questions about whether your patient might be eligible to participate in one of our ongoing clinical trials, please call any one of our doctors or contact our research coordinator, Leslie Marcus (lmarcus@garetina.com).

Current Recruiting Clinical Trials:

We are currently participating in trials for:

- Wet AMD: Xbrane XBR 1001 XPLORE, Graybug GBV-102-002 ALTISSIMO
- Geographic Atrophy: Genentech GR40973 Gallego, Apellis APL2-303 DERBY, Gyroscope Therapeutics GTSCOPE, Geminin GEM-NH-001/002 CLARITY
- Diabetic Macular Edema: Novartis CRTH258B2305 KINGFISHER, Genentech GR40550 PAGODA PDS
- Diabetic Retinopathy: Novo Nordisk NN9535-4352
- Central Retinal Vein Occlusion: Novartis CRTH258C23202 RAVEN

Clinical Care Discussion: Elmiron

There have been increasing reports over the past two years since the initial report of a series of cases of retinal damage from chronic exposure to pentosan polysulfate sodium, brand name Elmiron (Pearce WA, Chen R, Jain N. Pigmentary Maculopathy Associated with Chronic Exposure to Pentosan Polysulfate Sodium. Ophthalmology. 2018 Nov; 125(11):1793-1802). The retinopathy seen in these cases, as well as a few cases we have seen in our practice, can be severe, worsen over a short number of years, and cause irreversible vision loss.

Since then, there have been more reports out of Harvard with similar findings showing continued progression of a patient's retinopathy for 6 years after discontinuation of the drug (Huckfeldt RM, Vawvas DG. Progressive Maculopathy After Discontinuation of Pentosan Polysulfate Sodium. OSLI. 2019 Oct, 1;50(10):656-659). These findings and reports are similar to our experience with hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil) toxicity and further studies will help elucidate the risk factors as well as screening and monitoring criteria for patients on the medication.

Until standardized monitoring and screening criteria are established, we recommend that you refer patients who you have on this medication for a baseline exam with testing including fundus photography, autofluorescence, and optical coherence tomography (OCT) scans.

For any patient who is experiencing visual symptoms or decreased vision, we strongly recommend an examination with testing (OCT, fundus photos, autofluorescence, and/or visual field testing) at the next available appointment.

Spotlight with a Georgia Retina Doctor:

Dr. Stephanie Vanderveldt

This edition we were fortunate to sit down for an interview with Dr. Stephanie Vanderveldt. We are lucky to have Dr. Vanderveldt (or as we affectionally refer to her as Dr. V) in the practice as she brings a top-level skillset after having trained at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, which is consistently ranked as the top ophthalmology program in the country. Dr. V practices in the Cumming and Northside offices.

Lightpipe: Why did you choose retina?

Dr. V: I was enamored by Retina as a specialty during my residency. I found the surgery to be challenging, varied, and even beautiful. I love the fact that examination of the retina provides clues to complex diseases that can affect the whole body. This gives us a chance to really change the course and outcome of people's lives. Because of the close follow-up that retinal surgical and medical treatment requires, we have the opportunity to get to know our patients and their families well. I'm always learning new things and new techniques—it's such a rewarding field.

Lightpipe: What do you love about Georgia Retina?

Dr. V: I'm in my 12th year of practice with Georgia Retina, and what I love the most is the dedication that all of us have to giving our very best to our patients. The incredible staff that works alongside is so caring and so patient. They and my fellow doctors are truly a family. We care for and support each other both in and out of the office.



Lightpipe: What do you for fun?

Dr. V: Well, my two French Bulldogs, Grace and Zoey, are my evening entertainment. They always keep me laughing (and vacuuming). Lately I've been doing a lot of cycling. Most days I just ride a spin class, but when the weather is nice, I really enjoy getting out on my road bike. I've even started incorporating cycling into my other passion, travel. I had the chance to bike through Croatia last fall and through the Netherlands and Belgium last spring.



Lightpipe: Where is your next vacation?

Dr. V: Well, I'm not exactly sure where my next vacation will be, but I really love vacations that allow me to see wildlife up close. High on my bucket list are Antarctica, swimming with whale sharks in Belize, and seeing the orangutans in Borneo. It's going to take me several years to accomplish that list, but I'll fill in the Lightpipe with photos when I do!

Thank you for reading our Summer 2020 Light Pipe Newsletter!

If you have time, please take a moment to answer a few questions about this year's publication.

By doing so, you're helping Georgia Retina become an even better practice.

Click here to begin: <https://forms.gle/MSkQacJ1Nks9aEL48>

Our Physicians:

Michael S. Jacobson, M.D. | Scott I. Lampert, M.D. | Jay B. Stallman, M.D. | Mark J. Rivellesse, M.D. | Sean S. Koh, M.D. | Atul Sharma, M.D.
Robert A. Stoltz, M.D., Ph. D. | John J. Miller, M.D. | Stephanie L. Vanderveldt, M.D. | Hyung Cho, M.D. | S. Krishna Mukkamala, M.D.
David S. Chin Yee, M.D. | Harpreet "Paul" S. Wallia, M.D. | Yogin Patel M.D. | Gregory D. Lee, M.D. | Ella H. Leung, M.D.

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Blue Choice	Multiplan PPO
CCN PPO	National Preferred
Choice Care Network	Provider
Cigna	Network
Coventry Healthcare	Novanet
Evolutions Healthcare	Private HealthCare
System	Systems
First Health	Southcare PPO
Great-West	TriCare PPO, HMO
Humana	State Health
Medicaid	United Healthcare
-Peach State Medicaid	USA Managed Care
-Wellcare Medicaid	Organization
-Amerigroup Medicaid	WellCare Medicare HMO

Other plans are pending; please call to check specific participation.

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