

A photograph of two people, a man and a woman, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The man, in the foreground, is wearing glasses and a green jacket, smiling. The woman, in the background, is also wearing glasses and a white top, looking at the laptop. The setting is a bright, modern office with large windows.

## Vision care trends to watch

How the vision industry is changing  
and what you need to know

# 4 vision care trends to watch

We're watching shifts in the landscape so you have the insights you need to plan ahead.

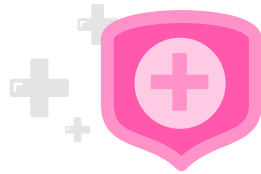
An aging population, new diagnostic instrumentation, surgical treatments and medications are changing the vision care industry. The increasing number of older adults in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> means a higher prevalence of vision loss and blindness making vision insurance benefits critical for this demographic.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, trends in remote eye exams have the vision care industry shifting to accommodate demand and expectations. Understanding these trends can help ensure that you offer vision care benefits that meet the changing needs and expectations of your employees.

Aging drives demand

Emphasis on early intervention

Re-envisioned treatments

Remote eye exams



150 million  
Americans are visual impaired<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Introduction: Demographics of the aging population"; Center of Elders and the Courts; eldersandcourts.org; Accessed November 2023. <sup>2</sup>Crews, J.; "The reality of aging and vision loss in America"; generations.asaging.org; May 11, 2023. <sup>3</sup>"At a Glance: Refractive Errors"; National Eye Institute; nei.nih.gov; Updated June 10, 2022.



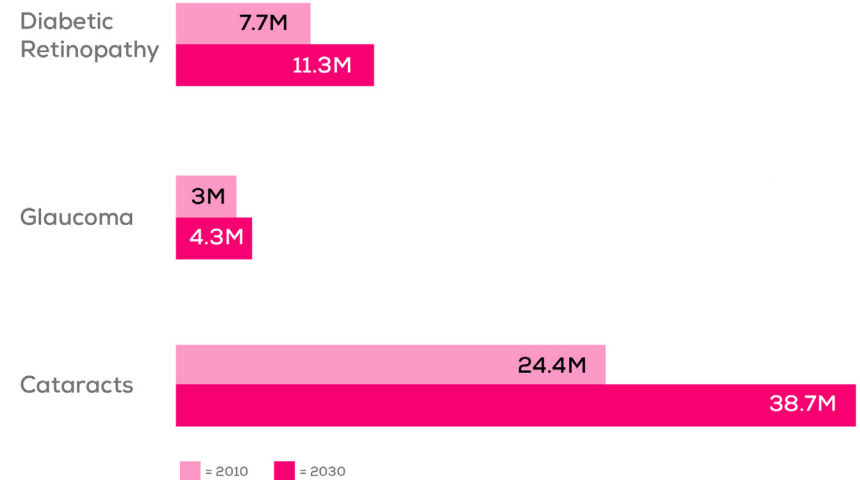


# Aging drives demand

It's estimated that 15 million more eye exams will be needed by 2030<sup>4</sup> and age is the driving factor. As people age, the number of vision-related problems and other health concerns naturally increases. With the over-65 Baby Boomer population topping nearly 61 million by 2030,<sup>5</sup> we can expect to see a surge in common age-related eye diseases.

Diabetic retinopathy, the leading cause of blindness in working-aged adults, is predicted to reach 11.3 million by 2030. Glaucoma cases are expected to jump to 4.3 million by then as well.<sup>6</sup> And more than 38.7 million people will suffer from cataracts in one or both eyes.<sup>7</sup>

## AGE-RELATED EYE DISEASES ARE ON THE RISE<sup>5</sup>



## What to set your sights on

Vision care benefits that support this increasing demand will be essential to meeting employee expectations. As vision demand increases, is your benefits package aligned to meet those expectations?



Because of the growth in age-related eye disease, **25% more eye exams will be needed in 2030 than in 2020<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup>"Optometry's medical eye care opportunity a boon for patients, coordinated care," American Optometric Association; [aaa.org](http://aaa.org); February 02, 2023. <sup>5</sup>Wright, P.; "Managing Low Vision in an Aging Population," Optometry Times; [optometrytimes.com](http://optometrytimes.com); January 05, 2023. <sup>6</sup>Turbet, D.; "Get an Eye Disease Screening at 40," American Academy of Ophthalmology; [aao.org](http://aao.org); April 08, 2022. <sup>7</sup>Chen, C., MD; "Shortages and Sustainability of the Anesthesia Workforce: What Does Cataract Surgery Have to Do With It?"; ASA Monitor; [pubs.asahq.org](http://pubs.asahq.org); June 01, 2023.

# Emphasis on early intervention

## Eye exams are about more than blurry vision

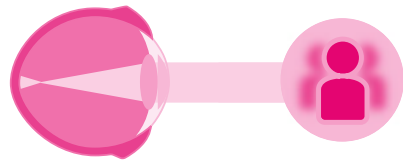
Eye exams are no longer just for checking vision problems. Access to regular eye exams can help catch serious underlying health concerns, like diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, thyroid disease and even cancer in their earliest stages.<sup>8</sup> By being alerted about these conditions earlier, patients can receive timely treatment and improve their overall health outcomes.

## Myopia is on the rise

The age of patients needing myopia-related care is growing younger. With 50% of the US population now living with myopia (nearsightedness)<sup>9</sup>, including 36% of children,<sup>10</sup> routine refractive vision care has become more important at an even younger age. And while myopia cannot be reversed, early intervention and treatment can slow its progression and lower the risk of more serious eye disorders like retinal detachment and macular degeneration as children age.

### MYOPIC VISION

Elongated eye creates shorter retinal focus, making objects blurry



**50%** of the US population is now living with myopia (nearsightedness)<sup>9</sup>, including **36% of children**<sup>10</sup>

## Lens innovations that can slow myopia

EssilorLuxottica (EyeMed's parent company) has developed two innovative lenses to slow the progression of myopia in children. These innovative spectacle lenses are much easier for kids and parents to manage because they are non-invasive, easily fitted and require minimal care. Stellest™ and SightGlass Vision are both correcting the vision, correcting the myopia and preventing high myopia.

The product of 30 years of research, Stellest lenses create peripheral defocus which slows the elongation of the eye. Similarly, SightGlass Vision scatters light to reduce contrast on the retina to reduce abnormal eye growth. (Both technologies are pending FDA approval.)

## What to set your sights on

Find ways to educate about the importance of routine eye exams as a part of overall health care. Do your vision benefits offer educational and at-risk materials to encourage and incentivize annual eye exams?



Eye exams can reveal serious health conditions, including cancer, diabetes, hypertension and more<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Mukamal, R.; "20 Surprising Health Problems an Eye Exam Can Catch;" American Academy of Ophthalmology; aao.org; April 29, 2022. <sup>9</sup>Porter, D.; "Myopia Control in Children;" American Academy of Ophthalmology; aao.org; November 15, 2022. <sup>10</sup>Hammer, R.; "Pediatric Nearsightedness Cases on the Rise;" Military Health System; health.mil; August 09, 2023.

# Re-envisioned treatments

To meet demand for new treatments for common refractive errors and vision-related diseases, there are now more FDA-approved vision care drugs and surgical procedures.

## Injectables

More providers and patients are turning to innovative treatments, like injectable eye drugs, for age-related eye diseases like age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic retinopathy. Lucentis®, Avastin® and Eylea® are some of the latest options.

## Lenses that reshape the eye

Also getting more popular are new ways to treat myopia in children, like orthokeratology, which uses a special contact lens to reshape the cornea.<sup>11</sup> EssilorLuxottica's Stellest lenses have proven to slow down myopia progression by 67% on average, compared to single vision lenses, when worn 12 hours a day.<sup>12</sup>

## Drops that correct vision

Drops to treat presbyopia (age-related blurry vision) have generated a lot of interest with patients and providers alike.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, surgical procedures like LASIK, phakic IOLs, and lenticule extraction have remained popular options to correct vision and treat refractive errors.<sup>14</sup>

## What to set your sights on

As new products and procedures become available, employees will be looking for affordable access and even tiered, product-based benefit options. Does your vision benefit package offer coverage for cutting-edge treatments like these?



The rate of surgical procedures to treat and correct refractive errors is projected to grow at a rate of 9.6% from 2020 to 2025<sup>15</sup>

The use of drugs to treat vision-related disease is expected to grow at a rate of 7.8% from now until 2030<sup>16</sup>



<sup>11</sup>"Ortho-K for Myopia Control;" My Kids Vision; mykidsvision.org; November 28, 2022. <sup>12</sup>Bao, J., Ph D, et al; "Spectacle Lenses With Aspherical Lenslets for Myopia Control vs Single-Vision Spectacle Lenses;" JAMA Ophthalmology; jamanetwork.com; March 31, 2022. <sup>13</sup>Rita, R.; "Presbyopia Drugs: A Drop in the Bucket?;" Review of Optometry; reviewofoptometry.org; March 15, 2023. <sup>14</sup>Kao, A., MD; "Emerging Trends in Refractive Surgery Management;" Eyes on Eyecare; eyesoneyecare.com; February 16, 2023. <sup>15</sup>Packer, M.; "Refractive surgery current status: expanding option;" Taylor & Francis Online; tandfonline.com; June 03, 2022. <sup>16</sup>"Ophthalmic Drugs Market Size, Share, & Trends"; Grand View Research; grandviewresearch.com; November 4, 2022.

# A closer look at remote eye exams

With recent technological advances, remote eye exams have trended up over the past several years.<sup>17</sup> Americans are showing a marked interest in access to remote eye exams. And with growing demand for vision care services, remote eye exams offer a promising solution.

Not to be confused with at-home vision tests, remote eye exams are comprehensive eye exams with the patient in-office for diagnostic tests. Results are shared with a remote doctor who runs refraction tests and consults with the patient via two-way video.

Remote vision care increases access for underserved populations,<sup>18</sup> decreases wait times and improves overall patient health outcomes.

## What to set your sights on

Comprehensive eye exams are important, whether they happen with the provider in-person or remotely with the eyecare provider interacting from an off-site location. Investing in telehealth and remote vision care solutions can help make eye exams more accessible and convenient for employees.

Telemedicine in optometry can serve to expand patient access to care, improve coordination of care and enhance communication

*American Optometric Association Telehealth Council<sup>19</sup>*

<sup>17</sup> Goodwin, E; "Eye Care Trends: Virtual Appointments on the Rise, Blue Light Glasses Aren't Fading Yet"; Civic Science; civicscience.com; August 23, 2023 <sup>18</sup> "Patient Benefits"; Digital Optometrics; digitaloptometrics.com; 2023. <sup>19</sup> Leading the charge: AOA recommends care standard for telemedicine use amid rapid change"; American Optometric Association; aoa.org; January 2023.



Let's navigate this changing vision care landscape together

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