

GUEST EDITOR: UDAY DEVGAN, MD

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# Ophthalmology MANAGEMENT

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## Technology meets surgeon needs

This issue features the latest in cataract surgery equipment and IOLs needed to augment patient outcomes.



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*Industry Insider* is a timely chat with an ophthalmic industry thought leader.

## GlobeChek's William Mallon, MD

*GlobeChek is a telehealth company that utilizes kiosks equipped with diagnostics capable of screening patients for glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration and cataracts, without dilation or having another person contact the patient's eye. William Mallon, MD, has served as GlobeChek's CEO since its founding in 2014. Dr. Mallon is also founder of Center for Advanced Eye Care, a Vero Beach, Fla., practice.*



IMAGE COURTESY: GLOBECHEK

William Mallon, MD

### **Ophthalmology**

**Management:** What advantages does the GlobeChek kiosk offer a physician and their practice?

**William Mallon, MD:** The kiosk can perform a comprehensive eye exam, with all the testing we would normally do in the office, in 10 minutes or less. We designed it to be a very straightforward exam — we wanted to be able to teach a fifth-grader to operate the kiosk in 5 minutes. This lets non-technicians operate it with no loss in quality.

With the kiosk, the doctor can perform a whole eye exam remotely. This summer, I spoke with an ophthalmologist who was on vacation in Idaho and used a GlobeChek to perform a full eye exam on a patient at his Virginia clinic. It would even be possible to use GlobeChek to operate a completely mobile office, and that mobility is really the future of tele-ophthalmology.

**OM:** What are the major challenges in introducing a new service like this to the market?

**WM:** A lot of those challenges were regulatory. Anything that changes the normal paradigm, there will be resistance. But the COVID pandemic knocked down one of the biggest barriers, reimbursement. A lot of medical practitioners think in terms

of insurance and what it pays for, so we're generally not used to paying a lot of out-of-pocket expenses for service in medicine. All that has shifted now, due to telehealth being a new status quo.

**OM:** How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the current market for GlobeChek kiosks?

**WM:** Before the pandemic, our business strategy was to rely on ophthalmologists who were "outside-the-box" thinkers. Our plan was to target public gathering places like shopping malls, emergency rooms and airports. We anticipated a few early adopters at clinics, but not widespread interest.

As you can imagine now, though, there's been a greater demand for safer eye exams. The GlobeChek is great for that as the test can be done without any exposure between the patient and the test-giver. At my practice in Florida, my patients love using the GlobeChek — more than 90% of them prefer the kiosk exam to being dilated in office.

I don't think you're going to see the genie go back in the bottle after this; there may be regulatory changes, but telehealth isn't going away. There is a huge percentage of the U.S. population that never receives eye care. If GlobeChek can bring this service to them, we have a chance to make a huge dent in that number.

**OM:** You have been CEO of GlobeChek since 2014 — how has the company evolved in that time?

**WM:** Since founding, we've been able to make some big improvements to not just the kiosk, but our patient service as well.

One consideration for us was the physical size of a GlobeChek kiosk. At its original weight and size, it couldn't fit through a door smaller than 5 feet, but that has been changed significantly for our commercially available models. Now, the outer shell can be removed and it can fit through a 3-foot door.

We also now have an IT team for GlobeChek consisting of six full-time developers. In addition to making the kiosk easier to use, they are helping create a GlobeChek app, which can be used by patients not just to access the GlobeChek physician network, but to store prescription data and other health information. That way, when those patients visit an eye doctor, all their information is in one convenient place.

We want this app to put eye care at patients' fingertips. If they wake up and have a problem, they can quickly get in touch with a GlobeChek doctor and determine if it's an emergency. This way, even if a kiosk isn't readily available, we can still provide service. **OM**