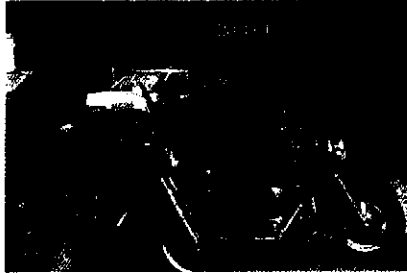


# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## *Oregon Eye Associates*

1550 Oak Street #5  
Eugene, OR 97401



Dr. Fine enjoying a motorcycle ride with visiting Cuban ophthalmologist, Raul Hernandez



Dr. Fine and visiting foreign surgeons

In response to competitive pressure several years ago, Dr. I. Howard Fine organized a partnership between himself and three other solo practitioners in Eugene, Oregon. They agreed to build a clinic with an optical shop, diagnostic lab and freestanding ophthalmic surgery center within the clinic. This enabled them, as solo practitioners in a relatively small town, to achieve economies of scale of larger practices and facilities (they believe this would have been impossible for any one of them alone). They did not form a group practice, but remained friendly competitors.

In putting together this venture, they formed the Oregon Eye Associates (OEA)—a partnership of four solo practitioners. OEA is a business that oversees the needs of the four ophthalmic practices. Its duties include: (1) relating to organizations, individuals, institutions and groups on their behalf, (2) managing a speakers bureau, a community resource program, and managed care contracting, (3) administrating the surgery center, diagnostic lab, optical shop and four branch offices.

There are now four practices with nine physicians including ophthalmic surgical sub-specialists, and 120 employees within the same building who have learned the enormous benefits of this unique arrangement. In spite of their competition, they all remain friendly because of the overall benefits from this particular arrangement. In addition, Dr. Fine believes the practice has allowed him to achieve a world-class practice in a small town.

Because of Dr. Fine's engineering background and ability to work with industry developing new technology, techniques, and instruments, OEA offers the latest advances in cataract and refractive surgery to their

patients—often years before they are made available to the general public. OEA has carefully organized the nursing and technical staff in the Oregon Eye Surgery Center (OESC). Every OESC staff member is intelligent, highly motivated, enormously professional and dedicated to the development of new technology. Dr. Fine reports there is never an argument about alterations to procedures, techniques, equipment, or any aspect of the work, because the surgery center employees enthusiastically embrace change. Important factors in the success of OESC are the unique capabilities of OESC Administrator, Ginny Pecora RN, Operating Room Director, Cheri Van Bebber RN, and the talented and highly focused Purchasing Director, Chris Holmes.

The Oregon Eye Surgery Center was completed in 1988 and is licensed by the State of Oregon. There are three operating rooms in which more than 3000 surgeries are performed each year, including cataract and refractive surgery, oculoplastic, corneal, vitreo-retinal and muscle surgery. Ophthalmic anesthesia services are provided by CRNAs. OESC also participates in charitable services for low-income patients referred by a community group, Volunteers in Medicine.

Dr. Fine and his colleagues say they have benefited enormously from membership in OESS, obtaining guidance and counsel during a certificate of need challenge, and throughout the early construction and development of the surgery center. Dr. Fine claims, "Having our own surgery center has converted my practice into the greatest adventure imaginable in our specialty." ♦

*I. Howard Fine MD, is a long-standing member of the OESS Board of Directors. He is also Immediate Past President of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery.*