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Relief in Sight

Staffed by fellowship-trained clinicians known for their expertise and empathy, **Valley Eye Professionals** strives to protect patients' vision and preserve their quality of life.

BY ERICA YOUNG | PHOTO BY AVI LOREN FOX

Once we hit adulthood, the days tend to speed by at a blistering pace. It seems a decade can pass in the time it takes to blink. Meanwhile, our eyes are experiencing subtle, even undetectable changes that can compromise our vision and affect our overall health.

Valley Eye Professionals LLC in Huntingdon Valley is an ophthalmology and optometry practice staffed by a team of eye-care professionals who are committed to delivering expert, personalized care for patients in every stage of life. Each of Valley Eye's four fellowship-trained ophthalmologists has a different area of subspecialty, making it easy for patients to receive all-inclusive care under one roof. One of those physicians is Jody Piltz-Seymour, M.D., a practice partner with more than 30 years of experience. She specializes in glaucoma and cataract surgery.

"We are all academic-based ophthalmologists affiliated with Wills Eye Hospital," says Dr. Piltz-Seymour. "We are all fellowship trained, which, as a community-based eyecare practice, is unique. We've each obtained subspecialty training after residency in a specific field. That means we can offer expert, cutting-edge subspecialty care right in our community."

Valley Eye Professionals offers state-of-the-art glaucoma care, cornea and refractive surgery, and advanced cataract surgery, as well as cosmetic and reconstructive oculoplastic surgery. The practice can provide both routine eyecare and intensive care to some of the most complex patients who might otherwise have to travel downtown to a university eye hospital.

"Being able to offer all levels of eye care right in the neighborhood helps patients obtain care more quickly," Dr. Piltz-Seymour adds. "It also gives our patients peace of mind that they will be taken care of by doctors that see them as people, not just patients."

Dr. Piltz-Seymour is a nationally recognized glaucoma specialist who spent the first half of her career running the glaucoma service at the University of Pennsylvania's Scheie Eye Institute. She trained residents and fellows, while also overseeing clinical trials before going into private practice. She joined Valley Eye Professionals in 2014.

"When I came to Valley Eye I found a home,



Valley Eye Professionals' clinical team includes (left to right) Drs. David DiFranco, Jody Piltz-Seymour, Alessandra Intili, Colleen P. Halfpenny, and Frank Chin.

and a culture that fit my patients and fit me," she says. "It's a home where patients come first, where doctors care about each other, and where we work together as a team to find the best care for our patients."

Alessandra Intili, M.D., another partner with Valley Eye, is a comprehensive eyecare specialist with training in oculoplastic surgery, cosmetic eye care, and cataract surgery. She provides both cosmetic and reconstructive oculoplastic surgery in addition to routine and laser assisted cataract surgery. Dr. Intili trained at Wills Eye Hospital before coming to Huntingdon Valley six years ago. She appreciates the practice's unflinching commitment to patient care. She currently serves as the Chief of Ophthalmology at Holy Redeemer Hospital.

"I wanted a practice that allowed me to practice in a way that allows me to build patient relationships over years," says Dr. Intili. "I get to build longstanding relationships with my patients through time; we're not passing patients across practices or across other specialties. We get to meet our patients and their families, and understand what's important to them as they continue to age."

Colleen P. Halfpenny, M.D., has been with Valley Eye for more than a decade, providing expert cataract and refractive care. She is a region-

ally recognized laser vision correction specialist, offering LASIK and other refractive services. Frank Chin, M.D., joined Valley Eye two years ago as the second member of the Glaucoma Care Center of Excellence. Optometrist David DiFranco, O.D., is available for all routine care, glasses prescriptions, and contact-lens fittings.

Drs. Intili and Piltz-Seymour suggest that regular wellness care may be the best way to care for the eyes, treating any changes in a patient's health or vision as they arise.

"Glaucoma is a leading cause of irreversible blindness in the United States, and half of the glaucoma in the United States is undiagnosed," Dr. Piltz-Seymour says. "It is also asymptomatic;

you don't feel it and you don't notice it until it's advanced. When it's advanced the damage is permanent, so our goal is to catch it when it's asymptomatic and prevent vision loss."

Glaucoma is not the only "insidious" form of eye-related pathology. Regular eye exams may help catch other diseases and disorders early, thereby preserving as much of the patient's vision as possible. Diabetic patients should receive an eye checkup at least once a year.

"Even if you feel your vision is strong, it's always good to touch base," Dr. Intili says. "We can get a general sense of what is going on with the body. An eye exam is a window into the system and gives us the chance to catch things like cancer, undiagnosed blood pressure—things that can be prevented and can enhance your overall quality of life."

"We understand the real sensitivity it takes to work with our patients to make sure that they can protect their quality of life," adds Dr. Piltz-Seymour. "At Valley Eye, we treat our patients with expertise and empathy, and always as individuals." ■

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