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Dear Patients & Friends,

A lot has happened in the last two years, but especially in the last 5 months. I am now entering my 35th year of service to the people of Whidbey Island. Two years ago, when I sold the practice to Dr. Mike Mequio, I could have never anticipated the course of events that would follow.

When Mike came, it began to allow me more time to pursue volunteer service as well as spend time with family. Then came his plane crash in early April of this year with tremendous impact on Mike, his family, Whidbey Eye center, its employees, and of course on all of the patients.

We all dug in to help, but it was very evident Mike could no longer manage and maintain the practice. Thankfully he had already a working relationship with Cascadia Eye, and a very quick sale could be orchestrated. Cascadia Eye was locally established in 1985 by Dr. Nannette Crowell, with whom I have enjoyed an excellent colleague relationship since her arrival.

Though the sale was quick, the transition has been at times strenuous and difficult. But the assimilation of Whidbey Eye Center into Cascadia Eye is smoothing out. I am very thankful for Cascadia Eye and their exceptionally fine complement of physicians stepping in. They have helped me return to a transitioning practice and lifestyle while bringing in very talented cataract and corneal surgeons with Dr. Siapco and Dr. Pereira, and ophthalmic plastic surgeon, Dr. Heffernan. Now, we also have a general ophthalmologist to provide patient care for the Coupeville clinic: Dr. Jeffrey Adkins. Dr. Adkins will bring all his skills to continue to manage the complex glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and age related macular degeneration that requires a high level of expertise as well as a continued presence and commitment. They are all a great fit for the island.

In addition to the professional services, a new optical shop has been put into the practice. Great products with affordable prices will be available—this is really good news with spiraling health care costs. Locally-designed frames are priced between \$35.00 and \$100.00! This office has also been remodeled to accommodate the optical shop; it looks great and we are getting lots of positive feedback and compliments from the patients.

I have no immediate plans to retire, but I do have plans for increasing my volunteer service, so hence I will be less available. I have complete confidence that Cascadia will skillfully and compassionately serve you, as we share in your eye health care and management. Please be encouraged that the transition is smoothing out, I'm still around, and on the occasion you see the new staff, know you are in the best of hands.

I hope to see you Oct 11th at our open house (3:00-6:00 PM) and look forward to introducing you to the staff of Cascadia and showing you the positive changes around the office.

Thanks so much for all your loyalty over the years!

Warmest regards,

Mark Cichowski, MD

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