



**BC Doctors of Optometry
Member Spotlight:
Dr. Amit Mathur**



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BC Doctors of Optometry Member

About me:

Today I spend almost all of my time as the President of CloudMD Software and Services Inc. (TSXV:DOC) and managing my optometry clinics - but I always start defining myself with my childhood in a small northern BC town of Kitimat. To this day, I find many of my core values stem from this rural, small town upbringing. I studied General Science with pharmacology studies at UBC for 3 years and then attended the University of Waterloo. This was a great experience for me, and I was able to collaborate with my professors in research and was first published in an international contact lens journal on the topic of reverse geometry contact lens design. I graduated in 2000 from UW with the Ontario medal of Proficiency and started my first job in Windsor Ontario at a busy refractive eye centre. It wasn't long that I began to miss beautiful BC and the mountains and returned to work in North Vancouver with Dr. James Thompson. He was a great mentor, and I was able to participate in VT and all the facets of and independent practice. Alongside of this work, I began to start clinics and acquire clinics with partners in a group practice. This was a great, fast paced experience. With larger patient numbers, I was able to participate in product research, advise some of the eyecare pharma and product partners and lecture on

their behalf. Over the last 20 years, my core practice in Burnaby has been our model of an integrative health unit. We work collaboratively with pediatricians, family doctors, internal medicine, cardiology and pharmacists under one roof. It really allows us as optometrists to be an integral health provider in the care delivery of patients, especially those suffering from chronic diseases.

Working in northern communities really gave me a chance to understand the issues of access to care. I really feel that being in remote indigenous communities made me aware of the challenges that still exist and the lack of continuity of care models. This experience continues to inspire me in the work I do today.

I really had a "TSN turning point" after a motor vehicle accident in 2011. I was forced after struggling with concussive symptoms to slow down and limit my practice and clinical work for several years. But as this aspect of my work slowed down, I was able to explore other opportunities and co-founded a telehealth company called Livecare. This venture allowed me to use my clinical knowledge in developing models for virtual care that are used to this day. Today, I continue eyecare in Burnaby and Squamish at our Omni Eye and Vision clinics and have the privilege to continue to advance virtual care and digital health solutions as the President of CloudMD Software and Services Inc. alongside a management team of health care leaders in Canada. Who would have ever forecasted a pandemic? It has been rewarding to work with CloudMD to assist clinicians, counsellors, family doctors, allied health providers and optometrists continue services virtually in these unique conditions. Our product Livecare Connect is used North America wide as a secure solution to serve our patients with built in workflow, payment solutions, and the ability to have patients fill in and sign consent forms etc., all while being compliant for healthcare. I am excited about the future of eyecare, and how technology will disrupt and improve the delivery of eyecare.

How do you define success?

Success for me is a being able to create work-life balance. I've always worked very hard, and although financial security is important, the ability to affect the lives of people positively to me is paramount. I am a family man, being a good husband, father, son, son-in law, brother - taking care of your loved ones is success. As I get older and wiser, its family, health, and this balance that I would say defines my success.

What inspired you choosing optometry as your profession?

When deciding on a my professional path, I was lucky to have many mentors and family surrounding me that were "ologists" in the family. I was an extravert, liked connecting with people and wanted to be challenged while working in healthcare. I was also not interested in being on call and really wanted a work-life balance. It was the search of careers that met these requirements that led me to Optometry. I really enjoyed business and was always inspired by entrepreneurship and felt that Optometry had it all to offer. After 20yrs now, this initial research has proven to be pretty accurate.



What would you like to see BCDO accomplish in the next few years?

I think the BCDO has done a wonderful job in taking a lead and embracing concepts of technology and innovation. Leadership has worked very hard to educate and expose membership to solutions, options and trends that continue to affect our profession. I have had the opportunity as President of a digital health provider (CloudMD) to study and contribute to global trends in healthcare delivery. Patient centric models of delivery that are enabled by virtual care, in my opinion, are going to continue their growth. I hope that the BCDO continues it's focus in educating and exposing our colleagues to these solutions, trends, and opportunities that come with the changes in practice and care delivery. I also hope the BCDO continues to work with our healthcare colleagues to ensure we are seen as key providers in the circle of care as new health delivery models are launched in BC. It is integral for us to continue the excellent work engaging

the health ministry to ensure our work is recognized and remuneration advocacy continues.

What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?

Optometry offers the opportunity for patients to be instantly treated and assisted - like removing a foreign body or treating and abrasion as examples. But still I find it so rewarding to see how a child reacts when they put on their first pair of glasses and notices a world that is so much better, clearer than they could imagine. That smile and excitement that we have all felt, is truly so rewarding. I also find it very gratifying to practice as a part of a greater health team. Working with pediatricians, family doctors and internists together to help patients with their vision disorders and systemic condition as a whole is very rewarding. Also, today as the president of a public company, it has been great to see our technologies and the CloudMD virtual physicians app be of real service in a holistic, patient centric offering during Covid conditions.

What new direction would you like to see happen in Optometry?

I think the trends that I'm seeing in general health care delivery lend to practice adaptations that many of us have had to embark on already under pandemic response situations. The adoption of virtual care and more patient centric models of care including care at home has been sped up by years these last several months. I hope Optometry is able to keep pace and use technology, AI supported devices to expand our reach to patients. With these coming solutions I feel we will be able to better engage them in preventative care as well as better ongoing care and monitoring of disorders than ever. I also hope that we continue to see closer and more integrative models of care with primary care and ophthalmology both.

What advise do you have for new graduates?

As new grads, I think it's very important to find meaningful work that allows them to truly develop their own style of practice. In every profession, the first few years is such a learning curve, and ours is no different. The skills if not utilized in early years become harder and harder to use later on. This leads me to encouraging new graduates to take meaningful continuing education courses and engaging with their local family doctors to promote themselves and the profession as part of the patients holistic care team.