Corneal reshaping is another service we added to our own service menu. The procedure helps our patients, increases our bottom line, and often serves as a bridge to and from refractive surgery.

**What Is Corneal Reshaping?**
Also referred to as corneal refractive therapy, vision shaping treatment, or corneal molding, corneal reshaping consists of fitting FDA-approved reverse geometry overnight lenses to control myopia and mild astigmatism. During overnight wear, the center of the lens temporarily flattens the cornea, resulting in temporary vision correction. The daytime vision is similar to the results often found with refractive surgical treatment but is completely reversible.

**Our Journey**
It is common knowledge that ophthalmologists are generally resistant to offering any kind of treatment that remotely resembles the orthokeratology of the past. Admittedly, our doctors never actively sought to implement corneal reshaping in our practice. We discovered the therapy and the associated revenue-enhancing benefits by accident.

One afternoon in fall 2002, a manufacturer’s representative arrived at our doorstep and caught our physician, Dr. Lisa Wohl, during a rare break between refractive procedures and clinic patients. She had recently learned that she was not a candidate for refractive surgery, despite a lifelong desire to be rid of contact lenses and glasses, which she had worn for more than 30 years. She had hoped to become a LASIK ambassador by sharing her own LASIK outcome with her refractive surgery patients. Now motivated to learn more about her options for correcting her vision non-surgically, she was curious to discuss her potential visual outcome with the recently FDA-approved reverse geometry lens. She challenged the representative’s team to successfully fit her and her husband in the overnight lenses.

Not unlike our LASIK patients
who can recall their first glance across the laser room as being the moment that changed their lives, November 13, 2002, became a turning point in Dr. Wohl’s life—and in her professional opinion of this type of therapy as a viable option for temporary vision correction. Only later would we learn of the generous added benefit to our refractive practice and our bottom line.

**Ideal Candidates**

Patients who were not candidates for LASIK or PRK due to thin corneas or other contraindications were excited to find an alternative to soften their disappointment. These patients were thrilled to learn they might still be able to enjoy freedom from daytime contact lenses and daily eyewear. Others who were fearful of permanent surgical procedures have also been able to be free of glasses and daytime contact lens wear.

Post-surgical PRK and LASIK patients who are not candidates for enhancements also benefit: The treatment has allowed these anxious patients to avoid wearing daytime contact lenses or eyeglasses.

Additional bottom-line perks were discovered when our adult refractive patients asked us to fit their teens and children who are active in swimming, soccer, and other outdoor sports. Children and teens must have the support of parents who will ensure that children are compliant with attending appointments and are willing to practice safe contact lens handling. Children catch on to insertion and removal of the lenses and are very adaptable to the overnight wear of the lenses. In fact, Dr. Wohl’s 12-year-old daughter successfully wears corneal-reshaping lenses nightly.

**Risk Management**

Refractive surgeons should discuss any and all alternatives to refractive surgery as part of the surgical counseling. We now mention corneal reshaping to all of our qualified refractive patients who could benefit from an alternative to permanent procedures. This full disclosure is just another safety net in our policies for managing risk during the surgical consent process. Our patients appreciate knowing we have educated them on all surgical and non-surgical options prior to consenting to permanent procedures. Our doctors never want to hear a patient say, “Why didn’t you tell me about this option?”

**Physician Buy-In**

Dr. Wohl, along with colleagues Dr. Penny Asbell and Dr. Bruce Koffler, have presented talks at professional development seminars on the clinical outcomes, risks, and benefits of treating myopia and mild astigmatism with corneal-reshaping lenses. We have fitted approximately 500 patients and to date, we have not experienced any significant complications, due to what we believe is proper patient selection and proper lens-handling techniques.

**Getting Started**

To date, both FDA-approved corneal reshaping products require online certification for providers. Our refractive counselor screens for suitable candidates; the screenings are similar to those for refractive surgery candidates. The upfront costs to begin fitting the lenses were minimal. We purchased a set of starter lenses and already had a topographer.

In our practice, one of our ABO- and COA-certified technicians who wore the lenses herself became a certified fitter. She is now our primary fitter of the lenses, further reducing our overhead to deliver the service.

**The Bottom Line**

The typical fee charged for corneal molding can vary depending on your region. Patient financing is often useful when discussing payment options. Patients are required to return for annual exams, and replacement lenses are sometimes recommended. For practices with optometrists who participate in vision plans that deplete the profit margin of their bottom line, this is a great way to improve revenue-per-encounter benchmarks.

**Your Menu of Services**

As you can see, a personal experience by our own physician became the catalyst for a change in her mindset about orthokeratology in an ophthalmology setting. There are only a handful of ophthalmology practices offering this therapy in the United States, despite its popularity abroad. Additionally, offering corneal reshaping can differentiate your practice in the marketplace. I would encourage you to help your physicians take a look at how new technology has changed the design of these lenses and reconsider the therapeutic and bottom-line benefits of adding corneal reshaping to your menu of services.

Judy O’Hara, COE (630-351-2030; johara@wohleyecenter.com), is the practice administrator for Wohl Eye Center, Bloomingdale, Ill.