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## Is there still a place for the primary care optometrist?

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As the number of private practices decreases in favor of multi-doctor or multi-disciplinary offices, health maintenance organization (HMOs), preferred provider organization (PPOs), and chain-store practices, the question of survival of the private practice or solo practitioner remains a concern to the profession as well as the individual doctor. As insurance companies and increasing governmental oversight grows, the private practitioner can feel that he or she is obsolete, overwhelmed, or simply unable to cope with the changing healthcare picture. As the profession grows, with increasing responsibility and ever expanding scope of licensure, the issue of quality of care, prevention of litigation, meeting or exceeding the patient's needs, and coordinating with other practitioners to better care for the patient population continues to grow. Weighing the viable options can be equally daunting for the experienced practitioner as well as the newly licensed professional. Options may be limited due to financial constraints, geographic restrictions, practitioner age and experience, and proximity of patients and professional or other health-care colleagues and urgent care or emergency services. Before signing the death-knoll of private practice it is essential to weigh all the options, the benefits and detractors, and reassess the projected future of the private practitioner and this mode of practice.

### Biography

Pamela J Miller has opened her solo practice in Highland, CA, in 1973. She is a Graduate from the Southern California College of Optometry and Loma Linda College of Law, and a Life Member of the American Optometric Association, a Charter Member of the AOA Contact Lens Section, an American Academy of Optometry Fellow and a Distinguished Practitioner in the National Academies of Practice. She was the first woman on the California Optometric Association Board of Trustees, the first female OD on the CA State Board of Optometry and the first OD on the CA Board of Medical Quality Assurance. She has served on numerous boards, was the first President of the American Optometric Society and CEO of Optometric CE for five years. She lectures extensively, and has written seven books and over 250 articles, while serving as a Contributing Editor to numerous journals for over 40 years.

### Notes: