

Physicians Utilize Alma's Light-Based Systems to Remain Profitable

By Bob Kronemyer, Associate Editor

Consumers seeking less expensive aesthetic procedures with minimal discomfort and downtime are increasingly turning to light-based technologies from Alma Lasers, Inc. (Buffalo Grove, Ill.). "Due to changes in technology, we are seeing a trend toward non-invasive solutions, which are less costly," said Irv Wiesman, M.D., a plastic surgeon practicing in Chicago, Ill. "People are still spending money, but are a little more conscious about the price tag."

In the first quarter of 2009, Dr. Wiesman's revenues were down 40% as a result of consumers pulling back on discretionary spending. To compensate, Dr. Wiesman began running monthly promotions for non-surgical procedures such as skin tightening, volume reduction on the face and body, hair removal, treatment of acne and skin resurfacing.

Dr. Wiesman uses the Accent^{XL} radio-frequency device for skin tightening and volume reduction on the face and body. In addition, he has the Super Hair Removal (SHR) mode for both Harmony^{XL} and Soprano^{XL}. "Hair removal is one of the most popular procedures being performed," Dr. Wiesman conveyed. "SHR has made hair removal significantly less painful compared to traditional lasers."

Fractional laser resurfacing with the erbium Pixel Perfect on the Harmony^{XL} is also quite popular. "This is phenomenal technology," Dr. Wiesman noted. "Treatment is not very painful and the intensity can be adjusted. You can treat extremely light if a patient just desires a nice, refreshed look, or you can reach deeper for acne scars and skin tightening. It is also effective on all skin types."

"We've also observed an increased demand for non-surgical procedures," said Gregory S. Keller, M.D., who is a facial plastic surgeon in private practice in Santa Barbara, Calif., as well as an associate clinical professor and co-director of the Facial Plastic Surgery Fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles. "Price is important. We've been able to remain competitive, in large part because Alma's lasers are priced lower than other manufacturers and we achieve a better result." In fact, Dr. Keller's practice is doing so well with non-surgical aesthetic treatments that he recently added a nurse and a receptionist to the spa side of the business.

Pixel Perfect fractionated devices "have drastically reduced the amount of downtime, morbidity and hypopigmentation compared to CO₂ resurfacing," Dr. Keller explained. "You can achieve a nice result for acne scarring, fine wrinkles and sun damage, with minimal downtime."

For hair removal, Dr. Keller uses the Soprano^{XL} in SHR mode. He also offers light-based treatments using the Harmony multiplatform system. "With any of these Alma technologies, the pain level is approximately 2 on a scale of 1 to 10."

"Although surgery is still the gold standard, people are looking for less morbidity, quicker healing and a good result," said Dr. Keller. "Technologies such as those developed by Alma, effectively address these concerns. Furthermore, I believe the secret to our success is our willingness to pass our savings onto the consumer."



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