



**Back Row:**(L-R): Mr. Bo Matherly, MSgt Patrick Holena, Dr. Paul Webb...**Front Row:** (L-R): SrA Dexter Raflares, TSgt Michael Rountree, Maj Weilun Hsu

## **A SALUTE TO: MAXWELL AFB OPTOMETRY CLINIC**

Vision ready is mission ready! This isn't just a slogan for the Optometry Clinic at Maxwell AFB - it is a solemn commitment and source of pride. With this guiding focus and the attitude that anything is possible, the clinic has been extremely successful in taking care of their patient population while simultaneously exceeding productivity goals.

As the primary eye care provider for Air University, the 42d Air Base Wing, and 33 associated and geographically separated units, the Maxwell Optometry Clinic provides service for over 40,000

beneficiaries. In addition to providing primary eye care, they also support aviator vision programs, the Air Force Refractive Surgery and vision readiness programs. The clinic implemented several unique time-saving initiatives that allowed them to consistently remain in the top tier of the Air Force Optometry Service for efficiency and value of eye examinations.

Over the last 24 months, the clinic struggled with 50 percent optometrist staffing. Despite this shortfall, the clinic did not curtail any services. Instead, they used a combination of modern technology and dedicated professionals to continue to provide services to all TRICARE Prime patients, while maintaining support for the Air Force Refractive Surgery Program. To accomplish this goal, the clinic restructured patient flow and instituted changes that expanded the role of a very talented cadre of paraoptometric technicians.

The clinic adopted a "U" shaped flow for patients where they enter one door of the clinic and constantly progress around the "U" until they eventually exit another door. This flow allows a consistent pattern for every patient. Patient status is easily tracked by the paraoptometrics and allows any technician to assist at any point during the examination. The clinic also implemented a two exam room setup for the optometrist that allowed maximum productivity by eliminating time lost to exam room turnover.

When the clinic finally secured an additional provider in October 2008, the efficiencies gained during the manning shortage generated tremendous benefits for their patient population. By keeping the same procedures in place, the clinic continues to offer services to all TRICARE Prime beneficiaries and does so with excellent access. Same day or next day appointment availability has been the norm for quite some time. With this additional capacity, the clinic expanded its refractive surgery service to other Air Force bases and patients have come from as far away as South Carolina to have their initial evaluation.

Through innovation and creative problem solving, the Maxwell Optometry Clinic provides services in a highly efficient and effective manner, while consistently earning high praise from their patients.

### **HAVE A PERSON OR PROGRAM YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE?**

The purpose of the "SALUTE TO..." section is to enhance awareness of special interest items, best business practices, exceptional staff members, and/or unique or successful programs within our region. There is always someone who has an interesting story or background to share; someone who has done something that is noteworthy, exceptionally important or has been awarded an honor of distinction. Special programs that have proven to be successful or recognized as a best business practice should also be considered for recognition and shared with others. You can also submit an article about your specific MTF (history, accomplishments, mission, etc.) Please include a picture (jpeg format) to go along with any article submitted.

We hope the "Salute To" portion of the newsletter enlightens our MHS staff within the region with stories that are motivational and interesting. If you have any questions, please feel free to call DSN 554-3278 or commercial (210) 292-3278. Submissions can be sent directly to [janet.hudson@tros.tma.osd.mil](mailto:janet.hudson@tros.tma.osd.mil).