



Arsen Grigoryan | *COE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT*

Harvard Eye Associates, CA

14 years in ophthalmology

Tell us about yourself and your current role:

My name is Arsen Grigoryan, and I serve as the CEO of Harvard Eye Associates, a physician-owned ophthalmology practice and surgery center in Southern California. In my role, I work closely with our physicians, leadership team, and administrative staff to support strategic growth, operational excellence, patient access, and a culture that allows our teams to deliver high-quality eye care across multiple subspecialties.

What drew you to the specialty and the pathway to your role?

I originally intended to become a physician. I was pre-med and had the privilege of working at Harvard Eye Associates early in my career. Although I was accepted to medical school, I ultimately made the difficult decision to turn it down because my family needed me locally.

Rather than stepping away from healthcare, I chose to pivot. I continued working full time at Harvard Eye Associates while driving through the heart of Los Angeles to earn my MBA. During that season, I developed an enduring passion for helping those around me succeed.

At Harvard Eye, I had the privilege of seeing our surgeons give the gift of sight back to patients, and I was equally inspired by the heart of our staff, who were eager to support our physicians and care for patients. It was during that time that I knew I had made the right decision.

I became increasingly focused on building systems, establishing protocols, and evaluating the strategic downstream effects of each decision being made. At the core of leadership, however, was culture. Over time, we evolved our culture from good to great, and now from great to greater.

What ultimately led me to my current role was an innate desire to see the goodness in people, combined with a willingness to invest the countless hours needed to ensure that those around me have what they need to take exceptional care of patients.

What was the most challenging part of preparing for the exam?

The most challenging part was balancing preparation with the demands of day-to-day executive leadership. There is never a perfect time to study, especially in a busy practice environment. The key was being disciplined and intentional, while also recognizing that the exam covers a broad range of topics. It required both memorization and the ability to think through how concepts apply in real practice settings.

How did you prepare for the exam or training process (study methods, resources, mentors)?

I prepared by reviewing ASOA resources, studying the core areas of ophthalmic practice management, and connecting the material to real-world scenarios I encounter every day. I also relied heavily on practical experience. Many of the concepts became more meaningful because I could relate them directly to decisions we make in the practice, from staffing and financial oversight to compliance, patient access, and strategic planning.

What inspired you to pursue the COE certification?

The COE has a multi-pronged benefit.

First, it reflects a desire to be better and a willingness to place oneself on a deliberate path of improvement. To be strong, effective, and influential leaders, we must take the time to continually sharpen our own skills. Pursuing the COE helped me stitch together the practice-based knowledge I had gained over the years. It allowed me to connect dots that may not have been fully connected before, while also validating my understanding of what it takes to lead and operate a successful ophthalmology practice.

Additionally, the COE is an important symbol. It represents a meaningful achievement in ophthalmic leadership and recognizes a commitment to excellence within the profession. While true depth and wisdom come with time and experience, earning the COE is a significant milestone and one that reflects both dedication and professional growth.

What advice would you offer to those considering sitting for the exam?

My advice would be to start early, create a realistic study plan, and do not underestimate the value of your own experience. The COE exam is not just about studying definitions. It is about understanding how ophthalmic practices function as complex organizations. Use the preparation process as an opportunity to identify gaps, strengthen your knowledge, and become a more well-rounded lead.

How has achieving this certification impacted your professional development?

Achieving the COE certification has reinforced my commitment to lifelong learning and professional discipline. It has also provided an added level of confidence in navigating the many dimensions of ophthalmic leadership. For me, it represents more than a credential. It is a reminder that effective leadership requires continued growth, humility, and a willingness to keep learning.

Is this the year you obtain your COE? Visit <https://www.asoa.org/career-and-advancement/certified-ophthalmic-executive> for more information and to get started!

In what ways will this certification benefit your team, patients/clients, or the organization?

The certification benefits my organization by strengthening the leadership perspective I bring to the practice. A well-run ophthalmology practice supports physicians, staff, and patients. When leadership has a strong understanding of operations, compliance, finance, strategy, and patient care delivery, the entire organization benefits. Ultimately, better leadership supports better access, better systems, and a better patient experience.

What motivates you to continue pursuing learning and professional development?

I am motivated by the responsibility that comes with leadership. Healthcare is constantly changing, and ophthalmology continues to evolve through new technology, new treatments, payer complexity, and patient expectations. Continuing to learn allows me to better support our physicians, our employees, and our patients. I also believe leaders set the tone. If we expect our teams to grow, we have to model that growth ourselves.

How did you celebrate after earning your certification?

I celebrated with gratitude. Earning the certification was personally meaningful, but I also saw it as a shared milestone because so much of what I have learned has come from the physicians, colleagues, mentors, and team members I work with every day.

Who supported or inspired you most along this journey?

I have been fortunate to be surrounded by dedicated physicians, colleagues, and mentors who have challenged me, supported me, and helped shape my leadership philosophy. I am especially grateful to the team at Harvard Eye Associates, because working alongside people who care deeply about patients and the future of the practice continues to inspire me.

Outside of work and professional learning, what do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, staying active, and finding opportunities to recharge. Leadership can be demanding, so I try to stay grounded by making time for the people and activities that bring balance and perspective.

What is next on your professional development journey?

My next focus is continuing to grow as a strategic healthcare leader while helping Harvard Eye Associates adapt, innovate, and thrive in a changing ophthalmology landscape. I am especially interested in advancing physician-led care models, improving operational systems, expanding access, and supporting the next generation of ophthalmic leaders.

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