



## In the Spotlight: An interview with Mandy Sallach, OD

*Associate Director, Professional Relations*

**Q: Were there any experiences from your past that shaped your decision to become an optometrist?**

**A:** I started wearing glasses in third grade as a young myope, and like so many, my eyes were opened to a whole new world and my fascination grew from there. When I was 12 I begged my parents for contact lenses (because I didn't love the tortoise shell metal frames that covered half of my face—what were my parents thinking?!). Through these formative experiences I developed a close relationship with my local optometrist. I am also fortunate to have amazing mentors who helped me see the breadth and depth of what we can do, which solidified my choice!

**Q: How do you bring your voice and the voice of optometry to J&J, one of the largest healthcare companies in the world?**

**A:** Whether I am sharing my own personal experience as a doctor or speaking more broadly on behalf of the profession, I have the chance work closely with leaders across the company to help inform how we can better support the doctors and patients we have the privilege of serving.

**Q: How does J&J use its size for good when it comes to supporting advocacy for doctors and patients?**

**A:** Advocacy is about taking action. We do this by building relationships and engaging with policymakers and regulators, supporting regulations that protect patient health and the patient-doctor relationship, and collaborating with doctors and professional associations—which is my favorite part! When we talk to legislators and policymakers, our dedicated advocacy team focuses on core issues that matter to doctors and patients; advocating to improve patient outcomes.

**Q: How can our colleagues support advocacy efforts beyond “The Hill?”**

**A:** There are so many ways to get involved and advocate for our profession and patients. It sounds simple, but sometimes it can feel ambiguous or broad, especially if you are not actively engaging with legislators or lobbying on capitol hill. The truth is though, we are all advocates. Getting involved with your local, state, and national associations is a great place to start. I would also encourage everyone to act each day. Whether you are educating your patients in the chair about what you're doing during an exam, engaging with your local community to educate about the importance of getting an eye exam, or building relationships with leaders—you are taking action to elevate the profession through awareness and connection within your circle of influence.

**Q: What is something people may not know about you?**

**A:** I have been involved with advocacy since 8th grade! My first experience was through a program in Wisconsin where I got to visit the state capital, Madison, and learn about the fundamentals of civics. From there I just kept saying yes and being involved, as a student and professional. I advocate for myself, those I love, and the causes that are near and dear to me—and Optometry fits all three!

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