



INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL of
OPHTHALMOLOGY



CAMBRIDGE DECLARATION 2015

TO ENSURE HIGH QUALITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS OF EYE CARE TEAMS

Adopted Cambridge, UK, Monday 9th March, 2015

Recognition

In recognition of the enduring levels of extreme poverty existing in most regions of the world; and that there is a cycle in which large numbers of the poorest people and their children continue to go needlessly blind, and that there is an increasing threat posed by non-communicable chronic eye diseases, furthermore, those with permanent vision loss are unable to access the wider opportunities in rehabilitation, education, livelihood and social inclusion which are their right; and that quality eye health services are highly dependent on well skilled personnel of Eye Care Teams, including Allied Ophthalmic Personnel, we the participants at the Global Capacity Development Workshop for Allied Ophthalmic Personnel unanimously agree to this declaration.

*Allied Ophthalmic Personnel may be characterized by different educational requirements, legislation and practice regulations, skills and scope of practice between countries and even within a given country. Typically, allied ophthalmic personnel comprise opticians, ophthalmic nurses, orthoptists, ophthalmic and optometric assistants, ophthalmic and optometric technicians, vision therapists, ocularists, ophthalmic photographer/imagers, and ophthalmic administrators.**

*WHO Universal eye health: A global action plan 2014-2019 (2013).

We affirm:

- ▶ Our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right of every human being. In doing so, we affirm the dignity and worth of every person and their right to health including eye health, irrespective of their gender, age, disability, ethnic group, faith community, sexual orientation or poverty level. We also affirm the equal duties and shared responsibilities of every person for health and societal inclusion.
- ▶ Our commitment to the WHA6.64 Universal Eye Health: A Global Action Plan 2014-2019 and the three indicators at the goal and purpose levels to measure progress at the national level, one of which comprises the number of eye care personnel, broken down by cadre that includes: ophthalmologists, optometrists, and allied ophthalmic personnel.

We acknowledge:

- ▶ That to successfully build community eye health, the prevention of avoidable blindness and to develop opportunities for people with long term vision impairment, all stake-holders need to work together with appropriate levels of training and skill.
- ▶ That Allied Ophthalmic Personnel are committed members of eye health teams in every country of the world and play an essential role in delivering high quality, efficient, comprehensive eye services, inclusive of all persons, and in achieving Universal Eye Health.
- ▶ That despite their essential role, the development of Allied Ophthalmic Personnel has often been neglected, with gaps in their skills and capacities, especially compared with other cadres of eye health personnel.
- ▶ That there is a lack of continuing education for existing allied ophthalmic personnel to keep their skills current.

We further note:

- ▶ That in most countries Allied Ophthalmic Personnel are not well integrated into the eye care team nor professions recognised.
- ▶ That there has been little advancement in the development of standardised, competency based training resources to educate Allied Ophthalmic Personnel and sustain their human resource capacity for quality patient care and access to care.
- ▶ That recognition, advocacy, resources and funding for the education of eye care health providers have not been adequate in many settings.

We commit to:

- ▶ Ensure that Allied Ophthalmic Personnel are able to access high quality, sustainable capacity development.
- ▶ Seek Government recognition of Allied Ophthalmic Personnel and provision for their education, post training support, deployment and continuing professional development.
- ▶ Obtain commitment of key stakeholders in the eye care profession to support the value of Allied Ophthalmic Personnel as important team members.
- ▶ Collect, synthesize and share existing best practices and evidence of effective Allied Ophthalmic Personnel's skills and capacities.
- ▶ Develop and make available training materials, instructor guides and assessment tools to ensure that Allied Ophthalmic Personnel have access to high quality training programs.
- ▶ Increase the number of trained eye care team members.
- ▶ Work together to achieve the goals we have set.