



## **Address from WCO President-Elect, Sandra Block WCO Virtual General Assembly 2022**

December 15, 2022

As the President-Elect I believe that my responsibility is to support the efforts of our President Prof. Peter Hendicott. When he began in his role last year, albeit virtually, he spoke out about the need for optometry to continue to lead in eye care through expansion of practice to address the growing need to address vision and eye health problems, to strengthen our educational infrastructure and to ensure that we are a part of the solution in responding to the call to action of the world report of vision.

I have found that WCO needed a team to convey these messages. My involvement has occurred in many places.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working to support our collaboration with CooperVision on myopia. There has been significant efforts advocating for acceptance and additional pledges of the WCO Standard of Care Resolution. I sit on the small committee that meets bi-weekly (most of the time) and address dissemination of the evidence to our members about shifting our members to address myopia as more than simple a refractive error. I have presented as a member of the committee, 2 posters – one at the Myopia Conference in Rotterdam and the other at the Academy in San Diego. The committee has also been planning a webinar which will focus on myopia's 3 M's.

I have also been a member of the subcommittee for the new collaboration with ALCON on dry eye disease. Another condition that optometry is poised to address. We have already had one webinar and the series continues in January.

We encourage everyone to listen to the webinars on both myopia and dry eye.

In addition, over the year I have had the opportunity to share Peter's message in Latin America. At the meeting of the Deans in Lima, Peru. As well as, sat with the leadership of optometry in the office of the Vice President of Ecuador to advocate for recognition of optometry as a primary care profession. This move had been approved by a previous administration but was never moved ahead. I have learned that optometry in Latin America is alive and strong, and I look forward to seeing it grow.

I sit, representing WCO at the table for GMAC. This group was organized about 4 years ago by corporate entities to educate parents and caregivers about myopia. I have been amazed to listen to them talk about the public health side without any reference to sales or monies. They have



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created great marketing programs that seek to educate the public. They show that they care about the future of our children and use optometrists to explain what myopia is and what are ways to address myopia from the parent's perspective.

Currently, I am engaged in the planning committee of the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress. I hope everyone is excited about the event. It is going to be amazing. You still have an opportunity to apply to present. The window for poster submissions opens on January 16, 2023.

Over the year I have been involved in many conversations internally and externally with WHO, IAPB and other organizations that want WCO to share in the planning of the future. I want to thank our chairs for the amazing efforts to move optometry forward. And finally, I want to share one last message. WCO is fortunate to have a great staff that is always ready to help. Thank you for listening. With that I will close my report.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Block  
WCO President-Elect