



WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY
Advocacy | Education | Policy Development | Humanitarian Outreach

Dear Colleagues,

World Sight Day is an annual opportunity for all of us to talk about the importance of comprehensive eye care. This year, 2023, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) has chosen to *focus on* (play on words) the importance of eye care in working adults.

The evidence is clear that when a worker who is properly corrected demonstrates performance that far exceeds their ability when compared to output prior to being properly corrected for a visual impairment. Glasses are the most common intervention to address the enormous magnitude of preventable vision impairment due to uncorrected refractive error. This is an excellent reason to ensure that those in the 18-50-year-old age range access appropriate optical corrections.

Yet, the reality is that simply correcting a person for myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism, or presbyopia is only one step in addressing good vision and eye health. There are many visual conditions that if left undiagnosed and untreated can lead to vision loss that may not be reversible. The World Council of Optometry strongly recommends that adults have a full eye exam to ensure that there are no underlying vision or eye health problems that may need additional care such as cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy. In addition, the eyes are often referred to as the windows to the body meaning that some ocular changes are indicators for many systemic diseases that can be detected during a thorough eye exam.

World Sight Day is a great time to highlight the importance of talking to your patients, the members of your community, family, and friends about the value of obtaining an eye exam. We know that good vision is valued as one grows older. Several studies have demonstrated that people as they age are more afraid of losing their sight than losing any other sense. Often, loss of vision has led to an increase in loss of independence, depression, and potentially earlier mortality. Let's take the preventative approach together. A quick visit to the optometrist can be a way to stay healthy with good vision.

I recently visited my personal optometrist, Dr. Jennifer Harthan, received good news and reordered my contact lenses which I am picking up from her office. Please do not forget eye care providers need to get checked too!

Happy World Sight Day!

Sincerely,

Sandra S. Block
World Council of Optometry President