



# WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

*Advocacy | Education | Policy Development | Humanitarian Outreach*

Dear Colleagues,

As World Optometry Week 2026 comes to a close, I extend my sincere appreciation to the optometrists, educators, students, professional associations, and partners who joined the World Council of Optometry (WCO) in celebrating our profession and advancing our theme, "[A Shared Vision: Collaboration in Global Eye Care.](#)"

Across the globe, optometry leaders and organizations have used this week to highlight the importance of stronger, more integrated eye care systems. From community outreach to national policy discussions, these efforts reflect a shared commitment to expanding access to quality vision care and strengthening the role of optometry within health systems.

This year's World Optometry Week demonstrated how collaboration and innovation can advance clinical care and professional education. On World Optometry Day, WCO and Alcon launched the [Dry Eye Management Map](#), a new interactive tool designed to help clinicians quickly link dry eye causes with evidence-based treatment strategies. WCO also premiered a [global on-demand lecture](#) exploring optometry's role in the rehabilitation of patients with traumatic brain injury (TBI), highlighting how visual assessment, clinical tools, optical strategies, and interdisciplinary teamwork can improve patient outcomes.

Yet in many countries, optometrists remain underutilized in national health strategies. The evidence is clear: meaningful progress in reducing avoidable blindness and vision impairment will not be achieved without fully integrating optometry into primary and secondary health care systems.

Last year, WCO reinforced this vision through the updated [Why Optometry](#) document, which provides policymakers and health leaders with a clear roadmap for integrating optometry into healthcare systems through strengthened education, legislation, and workforce development. Fully embedding optometry within people-centred eye care, supported by strong referral pathways, collaborative care models, and modern technologies, will be essential to expanding access and reducing avoidable vision loss worldwide.

In 2024, WCO released the [WCO Competency Framework for Optometry](#), outlining the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for optometrists to contribute effectively to the global eye care agenda. Developed to advance the profession in line with the WHO Eye Care Competency Framework (ECCF), this framework responds directly to the urgent need for a stronger, well-prepared eye care workforce as reported in the 2019 World Report on Vision.

Building on WCO's commitment to strengthening leadership and advocacy within the profession, WCO has also introduced [OPAL Advanced Practice in Advocacy](#), a short online course for graduates of the [Optometry Program for Advocacy and Leadership \(OPAL\)](#). With applicants now selected, the 2026 pilot course will run from May 4–25, bringing together optometrists from around the world to deepen their skills in stakeholder engagement through sessions on NGO collaboration, advanced stakeholder management, grant writing, and more, along with brief participant presentations on current or past advocacy projects.

By collaborating across professions, sectors, and borders, we can build stronger systems of care and move closer to a future where no one is left behind because of preventable vision loss. When



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fully integrated into health systems, optometry strengthens prevention, enables earlier diagnosis, and supports timely referral and treatment.

As we conclude World Optometry Week, I encourage optometrists and their representative organizations everywhere to continue this momentum. Engage with your governments. Partner with other health professionals. Advocate for policies that recognize optometry as an essential part of integrated eye care.

Together, we can ensure that eye care is accessible, equitable, affordable, and effective for all.

With very best wishes,

Dr. Cindy Tromans  
President, World Council of Optometry