

Embargoed to March 12

Operation Eyesight Universal and partners including the Ghana Ministry of Health mark World Glaucoma Week (March 9-15) by encouraging eye exams to address high glaucoma rates in Ghana

Glaucoma, known as ‘the silent thief of sight’, is the leading cause of irreversible blindness and has no early symptoms. One third of cases are undiagnosed. Ghana has the highest rates of glaucoma in Africa.

Media are invited to attend: “Uniting for a Glaucoma Free World”, March 12, 2025, 9 a.m. to noon, conference room of the Ministry of Health. Scheduled to attend: Mr. Harrison Abutiata, President of the Glaucoma Patients Association of Ghana and Vice President of the World Glaucoma Patients Association; and Dr. Isaac Owusu Baffoe, Doctor of Optometry and a program manager at Operation Eyesight and Emmanuel Kumah, Country Director – Ghana, Operation Eyesight

Accra, Ghana, Tuesday, March 11, 2025: Operation Eyesight Universal and partners are marking World Glaucoma Week (March 9 to 15, 2025) by encouraging people to get eye exams to address high prevalence of glaucoma, the leading cause of irreversible blindness in the world. Ghana has the highest rates of glaucoma in Africa.

Glaucoma is an eye disease that can impact anyone. It occurs when optic nerve fibres connecting the eye to the brain become thin and frayed. Without eye exams, the eye disease often goes undetected, as there are no early-stage symptoms. Once vision loss occurs, 40 per cent of the nerve fibres are irreversibly damaged. The resulting vision loss from glaucoma impacts all aspects of life, including driving, employment and mental health.

Glaucoma by the numbers, according to the World Glaucoma Association:

- 78 million people in the world live with glaucoma; by 2040 it will be 111.8 million
- 7.7 million people have vision loss or blindness from glaucoma
- 90 per cent of glaucoma is undetected in low- to middle-income countries; 50 per cent is undetected in high-income countries
- Glaucoma runs in families: Immediate family members of those with glaucoma are four to eight times more likely to develop it
- 13-30 per cent of people experience anxiety; 10.9-24.7 per cent have depression

Glaucoma in Ghana – Data from Ghana Health Service share:



- 19 per cent of blindness in Ghana is caused by glaucoma (one in five cases)
- Of the 230,000 Ghanaians who are blind, 45,000 are blind due to glaucoma
- For every 100 Ghanaians, at age 30, eight have glaucoma; at 40, it is nine out of 100

Eye exams are key: Early detection, diagnosis and treatment can prevent vision loss

While glaucoma cannot be cured or reversed, it can be treated to prevent, stop or slow vision loss. Dr. Isaac Owusu Baffoe, Doctor of Optometry and a program manager at Operation Eyesight, advises people to “get screened and, for those who are diagnosed with glaucoma, to get regular check-ups and adhere to their treatment to help preserve their vision.”

Emmanuel Kumah, Country Director – Ghana, Operation Eyesight Universal, says, “Operation Eyesight Universal works with Ghana Health Services and other partners to provide eye health care through community and school eye screenings, comprehensive eye exams where glaucoma is diagnosed and treated through eye drops, as well as working with local hospitals that have the expertise and equipment to treat more advanced glaucoma cases with laser and eye surgery.”

Operation Eyesight is currently supporting 90 glaucoma patients in need with cost-free anti-glaucoma medication in Ghana.

Operation Eyesight encourages everyone to book their annual eye exam. Learn more at the Ghana Ministry of Health. [MOH advises public to have regular eye tests - Ministry Of Health](#)

A special screening is also planned for March 19, 2025 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the ICGC Restoration Chapel, Osu, Accra.

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About Operation Eyesight Universal *Learn more or donate at operationeyesight.com*

Operation Eyesight Universal is an international development organization that works to prevent blindness and restore sight. Its vision is the elimination of avoidable vision loss. Founded in Canada in 1963, Operation Eyesight is a global community spanning four continents – Africa, Europe, North America and South Asia. Its vision is global and the focus local, with teams on the ground in communities of work. Through activities like community outreach, water and sanitation projects, and health education, Operation Eyesight is addressing the root causes of avoidable vision loss which contribute to [six United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: no poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and partnerships for the goals.](#)

About World Glaucoma Week worldglaucomaweek.org

World Glaucoma Week is observed in March each year. World Glaucoma Week is a global initiative of the World Glaucoma Association in order to raise awareness on glaucoma. Through a series of engaging worldwide activities, patients, eye care providers, health officials and the

operationeyesight.com/newsroom



general public are invited to contribute to sight preservation. The goal is to alert everyone to have regular eye (and optic nerve) checks in order to detect glaucoma as early as possible. This year's theme is "Uniting for a Glaucoma Free World."

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