

“No Action Today - No Cure Tomorrow”



WORLD HEALTH DAY 2011

www.eyecarecaribbean.com

“We need to find ways to help everyone at risk of losing sight to Cataract, have access to safe and cost effective Cataract surgeries”



Arvel Grant - CEO - CCB/Eye Care Caribbean

World Health Day 2011 focuses attention on the challenges involved in drug resistance. While this has immediate consequences for those battling parasitic bacteria and viruses, the day holds equal significance to the almost sixty thousand persons who are blind across the English-speaking Caribbean.

In striving to prevent avoidable visual impairment and reduce the prevalence of incurable blindness, we face another kind of resistance.

Our Challenges

These include the numerous barriers to early detection and treatment of conditions which lead to loss of sight.



According to The Barbados Eye Study 1% of the population is blind. (www.journal.paho.org/uploads/1273777576.pdf)

The study highlights (as primary causes of visual impairment):

- Cataract
- Glaucoma
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Refractive Errors.

As we focus on World Health Day, we need to find ways to help every one at risk of loosing sight to Cataract, have access to safe and cost-effective cataract surgeries.

Glaucoma

Open -Angle Glaucoma is a leading cause of incurable blindness in the Caribbean.

Persons who are:

- 35 years or older;
- have had injury to one or both eyes;
- of African decent;
- or has one or more parent or grand parent, diagnosed with Glaucoma are at enhanced risk of developing the disease.



Individuals having one or more of those risk factors should have their eyes examined for glaucoma (at least) once every year, or as often as their Ophthalmologist recommends. Persons diagnosed with the

condition must use the prescribed medicines for the rest of their lives.

The cost of Glaucoma medicines are (often) extremely high, representing a serious barrier to life-long treatment regimes.

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Diabetes

Diabetes is the primary cause of Diabetic Retinopathy.

The Caribbean is an area of high prevalence of Diabetes. Studies seem to suggest prevalence ranging from 13% to 17% across the region. Given such high prevalence of the disease, the risk of persons with the condition, becoming blind from Diabetic Retinopathy, should be a major public health priority.



Therefore, national Governments should expand every effort to achieve “healthy public policies” which makes it easier for the entire population to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The immediate clinical and medical response, is to ensure that persons diagnosed with Diabetes, are referred to an Ophthalmologist, who will examine them for signs of Diabetic Retinopathy.



Given the fact that the wearing of spectacles and contact lens are (seen by many) as more of a fashion statement; the implementation of programmes to provide quality but affordable prescription glasses, represent reliable “gate-way” approaches to encourage persons to have their eyes examined frequently. One way of facilitating that national habit, is by encouraging the development of programmes to make eye glasses more: affordable, accessible and available.

CARICOM Heads of Govt
(photo: caricom.org)

OUR MISSION, OUR PURPOSE, OUR GOAL...

Our purpose is preventing blindness and visual impairment while restoring sight and creating opportunities for persons whose sight cannot be restored.



World Health Day is celebrated on 7 April to mark the founding of World Health Organization (WHO).

The theme for 2011 is “antimicrobial resistance” and its global spread.