



# WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

## **World Council of Optometry President's Statement for World Optometry Week 2025**

***Dr. Sandra S. Block, WCO President***

Dear Colleagues,

World Optometry Week provides a valuable opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of eye care, recognize optometrists' contributions to advancing eye care as a human right, and emphasize optometry's role in global health.

The theme for World Optometry Week 2025, "Eyes to the Future: Optometry Improving Global Wellness," reflects the WCO's response to key challenges outlined in the 2019 World Report on Vision (WRV). Issues such as the growing global population, aging demographics, and rising urbanization pose significant challenges to healthcare systems, particularly in providing sustainable eye care. By expanding optometry's role as a primary eye care provider within collaborative care models, we as optometrists are uniquely positioned to address these challenges.

The World Council of Optometry (WCO) has evolved from a reactive role in supporting our members to actively representing the profession in a proactive capacity, with a focus on addressing the increasing demand for quality, accessible, and equitable eye care. WCO envisions the future of eye care as one where optometry plays a central role in global health systems to meet this demand. As a relatively young profession, we must continue to educate policymakers about optometry's importance in the global health agenda.

One significant step recently taken by WCO was to develop a clear definition of the role of an optometrist, as part of [WCO's Concept of Optometry](#). To reduce confusion and help enhance recognition and regulation of optometry where it is needed, WCO has provided this clearly defined role of practice for individuals with an optometric title, focusing on the importance of optometrists occupying the level of a primary care provider.

In 2024, WCO released the [WCO Competency Framework for Optometry](#), highlighting the competencies required for optometry to participate most effectively in the international eye care agenda. This framework was developed to advance the profession in line with the WHO Eye Care Competency Framework (ECCF), which underscored the challenge of an insufficient number of eye care providers to address the more than one billion people affected by preventable vision impairment and blindness, as reported in the World Report on Vision. This report identified areas where optometry can play a more active role in reducing preventable impairment and ensuring at-risk patients are identified, treated, and referred out when necessary. Efforts have since focused on addressing gaps in eye care access, starting with the recognition of the provider shortage.

WCO believes that the documented number of people identified with preventable impairment is a direct call to action for optometry in this pivotal moment. Our members across the globe are entering the conversation on how to expand the workforce, raise awareness of the growing demand for eye care, and ensure practitioners have the necessary competencies to provide high-quality primary eye care. Additionally, WCO continues to partner with others to develop tools to assist practicing clinicians to address [myopia management](#), [dry eye disease](#), and [presbyopia](#) with the latest science on diagnosis, treatment, and awareness.

Now is the time to grow our professional footprint to help address the challenges outlined five years ago in the World Report on Vision. It is going to take time to effect change, but if optometry continues to work together, we can be part of the solution. Happy World Optometry Week!

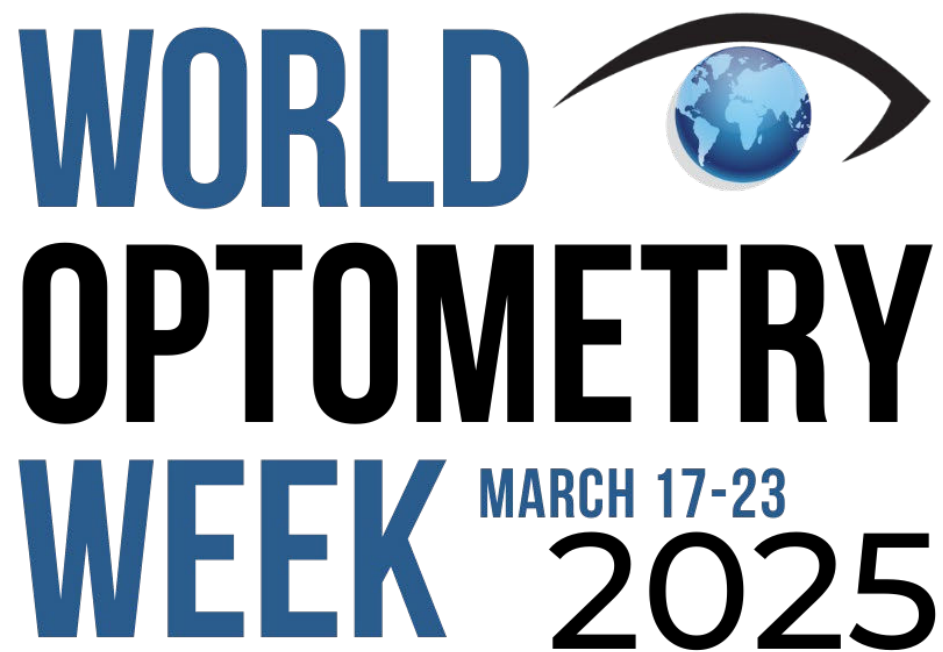
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Block". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Sandra" and "Block" being capitalized and prominent.

Sandra S. Block, OD, M ED, MPH, FAAO, Dipl AAO, FCOVD, FNAP, FARVO

President, World Council of Optometry

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World Optometry Week 2024 logo



Dr. Sandra S. Block

# **WORLD** MARCH 17-23 **2025** **OPTOMETRY WEEK**

*EYES TO THE FUTURE:  
OPTOMETRY IMPROVING GLOBAL WELLNESS*



**DR. SANDRA BLOCK**  
WCO PRESIDENT

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