



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More than 1,000 people gather for Eye Recommend's largest National Training Event since inception

(Calgary, Alta., Oct. 30) — Independent optometry clinics from across Canada filled the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto from Oct. 21 to 23 for Eye Recommend's National Training Event (NTE) East 2026. With more than 1,000 attendees and a sold-out tradeshow, it was the largest NTE in the cooperative's history.

Built around the theme Experience the Momentum, the event gave clinic owners, associates and their teams three days of practical education, peer connection and time to recharge together.

"Two years ago, our Events team started planning this event without knowing how many people would come, how the profession would change or what economic pressures clinics would face," said Lee Raffey, CEO of Eye Recommend. "What they built is a place where our members learn from each other. They brought their teams, embraced the education and made the most of every chance to connect. That energy is what makes this community strong and helps independent clinics keep growing on their own terms."

Keynote speakers Jia Jiang, Eric O'Neill, Tyler Hayden and Dr. David Coletto anchored the program, alongside breakout sessions on AI, benchmarking, myopia management and organizational culture. Each session was designed to give owners, managers and team members ideas they could use in their clinics the following week.

The tradeshow sold out with 65 ER Supplier Partners. Networking spaces placed throughout the exhibitor floor gave member clinics more room to meet suppliers face to face, ask questions and explore products and pricing available through the cooperative.

The event also made space for wellness and fun, from a hand massage station and fragrance bar to a roaming Roboboath and a Friday night team-building game show hosted by Eventology Canada. Comedian Jessi Cruickshank emceed, and the event closed with a Dîner en Blanc-themed dinner and Silent Beats dance party.

"NTE is where we build our community," said Colin Hobson, Chair of Eye Recommend's Board of Directors. "As a member-owned cooperative, Eye Recommend belongs to the practices in that room. When they come together to share what's working and celebrate each other's success, you see what makes independent optometry so strong. Our members don't just take part in this community. They built it."

NTE is one part of how Eye Recommend supports members year-round. Alongside regional trainings, one-on-one business coaching, newsletters and the new Member Portal, in-person events help members get consistent support wherever they choose to engage. Upcoming NTEs take place in Edmonton, May 13 to 15, 2027, and London, Ont., Oct. 21 to 23, 2027.

About Eye Recommend



Eye Recommend is a 100% member-owned cooperative of more than 700 independent optometry clinics and 1,700+ eye care professionals across Canada. Governed by a member-elected board, Eye Recommend gives independent optometrists access to business coaching, training, group purchasing and a national peer community, while members keep full ownership and control of their practices. Learn more at eyerecommend.ca.

Media Inquiries

Eye Recommend
Megan Evans
Communications and Marketing Manager
mevans@eyerecommend.ca
587.582.0204