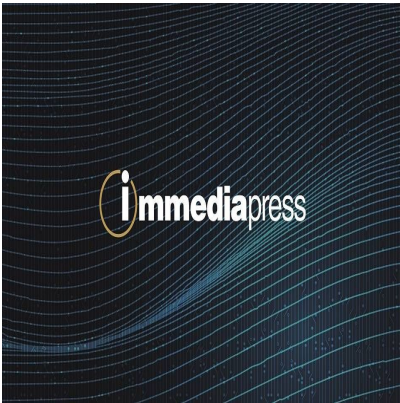




World Sight Day: HelpMeSee Calls for Greater Investment in Surgical Workforce to Address Global Cataract Blindness

Descrizione

COMUNICATO STAMPA - CONTENUTO PROMOZIONALE

JERSEY CITY, N.J., Oct. 8, 2026 /PRNewswire/ - On World Sight Day, HelpMeSee is calling for greater investment in the skilled surgical workforce needed to address one of the world's most treatable causes of blindness.

It's estimated that 94 million adults age 50 and older live with vision impairment or blindness caused by untreated cataract, yet more than half of people who need cataract surgery globally do not have access to it. In the World Health Organization African Region, three in four people who need cataract surgery remain untreated.

Cataract can be treated surgically, but expanding access to treatment depends on having enough trained professionals with proficient surgical skills to provide quality care where patients need it most. Shortages and the unequal distribution of trained eye-care professionals remain significant barriers to cataract surgery, alongside cost, infrastructure and other health-system challenges.

"Expanding access to cataract treatment requires more than recognizing the scale of the problem. It requires sustained investment in the people and institutions that can provide quality surgical care. Building a skilled surgical workforce is essential to creating lasting cataract surgical capacity in communities where the need is greatest," says Dr. Nicoletta Fynn-Thompson, Chief Medical Officer at HelpMeSee.

The call comes at an important moment for global eye health. In September, the World Health Organization opened public consultation on a proposed Global Initiative to Eliminate Preventable Blindness and Vision Impairment, intended to accelerate progress toward the World Health Assembly target of increasing effective cataract surgery coverage by 30 percentage points by 2030.

World Sight Day also comes weeks before the Global Summit for Eye Health, where governments and global eye-health leaders will convene to advance action toward universal access to eye care.

Building Surgical Capacity Through Simulation

HelpMeSee works to address the surgical workforce challenge through competency-based, simulation-based cataract surgical training. Through partnerships with training institutions around the world, HelpMeSee supports the development of sustainable local surgical capacity and the effective transition of surgical skills into clinical practice.

The HelpMeSee training system combines high-fidelity virtual reality and realistic haptic feedback with structured curricula and instructor-led education. This approach enables trainees to repeatedly practice surgical skills, recognize and respond to complications, receive objective performance feedback and build competency in a simulated environment before transitioning those skills to live surgery.

Progress requires strong partnerships and sustained investment in the people, training and institutions needed to make quality cataract care accessible to communities around the world.

Advancing the Global Conversation

Beginning on World Sight Day, HelpMeSee is sponsoring a weeklong Healthcare Information For All (HIFA) Spotlight on Cataract Blindness, Surgical Quality, and the Value of Simulation-based Training, running October 8-14.

The international discussion will bring together health professionals, policymakers, researchers and others to examine the global burden of cataract, the availability and quality of surgery, the role of simulation-based training, and the policies and resources needed to expand access to quality cataract care.

“No single organization can close the global cataract treatment gap alone. Progress requires strong partnerships and sustained investment in the people, training and institutions that make quality cataract care possible,” said Doug May, HelpMeSee President and CEO.

Addressing cataract blindness at the scale required will depend on coordinated action across governments, health systems, training institutions, NGOs, donors and local partners. Strengthening the surgical workforce and the institutions that support it must be a central part of that effort.

Support HelpMeSee on World Sight Day.

About HelpMeSee In a world where 100 million people are blind or visually impaired due to cataract, HelpMeSee, a not-for-profit under IRS 501(c)(3), has the global mission to eradicate cataract blindness by increasing the training of Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery (MSICS). This high quality, very low-cost procedure delivers successful outcomes at a fraction of the cost of alternative procedures. The HelpMeSee MSICS training system features very high-fidelity, virtual reality simulation with realistic haptic feedback, sophisticated competency courseware, learning management systems, and electronic learning aids.

HelpMeSee was founded by Al and Jim Ueltschi, who imagined building the MSICS training system by incorporating many of the methods and techniques used successfully in commercial pilot training. As co-founder of Orbis International where he served as its chairman for 35 years. He founded FlightSafety International, the world's foremost aviation training company. Al Ueltschi was an icon in the aviation industry and was devoted to ending preventable blindness in the developing world. HelpMeSee trains high quality, very low-cost MSICS to ensure that all communities have access to sight restoring affordable treatment. With more than 40 simulators and 19 training centers worldwide, HelpMeSee partners with governments, universities and innovators to fight the global cataract blindness crisis. For more information, visit <http://www.helpmesees.org>.

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