

## PREFACE

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The Caribbean Association of Ophthalmic Technical Personnel (CAOTP) is celebrating a number of achievements in 2016. This July marks our 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary as an Association. We are also very proud to be hosting the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Technicians and Nurses Programme in conjunction with the Ophthalmological Society of the West Indies (OSWI) 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress on the lovely island of Barbados.

This year also represents the hosting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference for the Nurses and I wish to thank the OSWI board, ORBIS, Dr Sonja Johnston and Dr Elethia Dean for getting this separate programme off the ground!

It is our hope that both the nurses and technicians will be able to attend and acquire up-to-date academic knowledge in a programme designed to meet their respective needs.

Five years after the World Ophthalmology Congress (WOC) in Berlin (2010), a report on our programme was submitted at the WOC in Guadalajara, Mexico, in February 2016 by Dr Sonja Johnston and Dr Lizette Mowatt. Both presentations were well received in general but especially by the African and Middle Eastern doctors.

It is hoped that a modified version of our programme will be implemented in those countries with a similar success rate. Our programme was designed to be taught by a core group of technicians and doctors on a weekly basis, providing lectures, workshops and quizzes. This has been quite successful in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, and used for preparation for the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO) examinations. We have taken the initiative to utilize social media and, hence, our Facebook page was launched in 2014, along with our WhatsApp chat where ophthalmic trivia and fun abound.

Our Facebook page has some success in attracting technicians from the United States of America to contribute to the page regularly and to advertise this conference as well.

This year has seen us gaining two new students from Antigua and Dominica. However, the challenge remains and must be overcome with support and consultation with OSWI as to how we can cater to the needs of Antigua, Dominica, Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad; countries with great landmasses and few or no senior technicians. Our database indicates that we have 26 JCAHPO certified technicians currently holding 45 (yes, 45) certifications but they are confined mainly to Barbados, Trinidad, Suriname and Jamaica.

It is our continued goal to work with our local ophthalmologists, OSWI and ORBIS and JCAHPO to achieve the same results in all of our countries. I therefore wish to acknowledge all of our ophthalmologists, ophthalmic technicians, corporate sponsors, OSWI, ORBIS and JCAHPO for their continued support.

I have been recently appointed to the JCAHPO education committee 2016–2017, where we will be reviewing academic material from and for our technicians worldwide. I am very pleased to be a member as I am also the only non-American on the committee.

We will continue to partner with JCAHPO and the Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology (ATPO) to provide us with certification and the continuing medical education credits to maintain our professional certification.

So we remain true to our aim of certification and education for all Allied Ophthalmic Professionals (AOP), within the region and forging extra-regional links.

I look forward to an engaging session in my home town of Bridgetown, Barbados.

**Marilyn Watkins-Ramdin**  
President