

PREFACE

This will be the 25th Annual Congress of the Ophthalmological Society of the West Indies (OSWI); an auspicious meeting, as the first OSWI conference was held in Kingston, Jamaica. This year, we will celebrate it at the Half Moon Hotel, Montego Bay, a favourite place for OSWI conferences in Jamaica. This meeting will be one of the biggest yet.

As we have reached our 25th milestone, it is a pivotal time for growth and development for us. It has been a very active year for OSWI and much has been achieved which will make this meeting a successful one.

Our lifestyle session continues to be one of great intrigue and information and this year keeps up that tradition. We will have our usual 5K walk/run, tennis and golfing activities at the lovely Half Moon Hotel and Golf Spa. The Ophthalmological Society of the West Indies has always been supportive of the certification of allied healthcare professionals. This includes Certified Ophthalmic Assistants (COA), Ophthalmic Technicians (COT), Ophthalmic Medical Technologists (COMT), Ophthalmic Surgical Assistants (OSA) and Registered Ophthalmic Ultrasound Biometrists (ROUB). This will be the 7th year that their workshop has been held during OSWI meetings. The Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO) will hold their internationally recognized certification examinations during our conference in Jamaica, thanks to their CEO, Dr Lynn Anderson.

This year, under the leadership of Marilyn Watkins-Ramdin, we will welcome the formation of a new society, the Caribbean Association of Ophthalmic Technical Personnel (CAOTP), to be launched during the 25th Annual OSWI congress. In recognition of this, Lenstec has offered a trophy and prize awards in their first Ophthalmic Technicians challenge.

We are very pleased this year to introduce a new and essential programme, an Ophthalmic Nurses workshop programme. This four-day event will run parallel with the OSWI congress and the CAOTP meeting. Thanks to Orbis, especially Dr Joan McLeod, who has been very instrumental in making this a reality with visiting guest speakers from the United States of America (USA).

The Garth Taylor Lecture this year will focus on a very relevant topic: "Successful Glaucoma Surgery for the

Difficult Patient". This will be given by Dr Alric Blake, a US-based glaucoma specialist and Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine. We in Jamaica welcome Dr Blake to the land of his birth. The Garth Taylor Memorial Lecture is a timely one as glaucoma is a disease that requires many modalities working together to ensure successful management for the Caribbean patient. We thank Orbis for their continued support in sponsoring the Garth Taylor Lecturer. The West Indian Society of Glaucoma Surgeons (WINGS), which was launched last year at OSWI, will also give their update at our meeting.

In celebration of our 25th Anniversary, OSWI has introduced a Special Feature Lecture (Spotlight on Research), "How Research Can Change Practice and Policy in Eye Care". This talk has been prepared by Professor Nathan Congdon, a world renowned glaucoma researcher, whose objective is to transform eye health challenges into innovative, collaborative and sustainable global solutions by combining programmes with research and advocacy. We hope that it will stimulate more research in ophthalmology in the Caribbean.

Young ophthalmologists are the future and to mark the 25th Congress, the Ophthalmological Society of the West Indies Young Ophthalmologist Group (OSWI YO) will be launched. Formal training with the University of the West Indies (UWI) DM Ophthalmology is now an established programme in Jamaica and this will continue in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. It is important that residents in training and recently qualified ophthalmologists have their special group to assist their transition into the real world of ophthalmology. This group was formed to address the needs of the West Indian ophthalmology resident in training and qualified ophthalmologists within their first few years of practice. We welcome the development of the UWI DM Ophthalmology programme in Barbados, as they join with Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Jamaica's DM Ophthalmology programme, the first in the Caribbean, was started in 2004 and celebrates a decade of existence this year.

The Ophthalmological Society of the West Indies has always encouraged the active participation of residents with the introduction five years ago of the annual residents'

presentation prize. Each year, we have residents from several islands competing. Several sponsoring companies have now included additional prizes, including surgical equipment.

Last year, live surgery was introduced at our OSWI meeting, which we have decided to continue for 2014. Our conference will end with an authentic Jamaican lime at the beautiful Seawind Club in Montego Bay.

This 25th OSWI Annual Congress meeting is as a result of diligent, meticulous work by the OSWI secretariat and the many members of the associated societies. Special mention to Dr Sonja Johnston and Mrs Alicia

Paponette whose keen eye for detail and organizational skills have made many successful OSWI conferences over the years. We thank our sponsors who have partnered with us through the years.

We welcome you to the beautiful island of Jamaica and look forward to an exciting and informative conference for our ophthalmologists, nurses and allied health professionals. Together we can achieve more.

Dr Lizette Mowatt
President
OSWI