

## World Sight Day: Have you had your eyes checked?

**OTTAWA, October 10, 2019** – On this, the most important day in the eye health calendar around the world, the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) is encouraging all Canadians to schedule a visit with their optometrist for a comprehensive eye exam.

In the most recent statistics<sup>1</sup> compiled for the prevalence of blindness and visual impairment, 36 million people are blind, and 253 million people are visually impaired. And yet according to the World Health Organization statistics, vision loss can be treated or prevented in 80% of all cases<sup>2</sup>.

A comprehensive eye exam is an important part of preventive health care, and could be considered a physical for the eye because it looks at the entire eye and visual system. It is able to detect eye diseases like glaucoma, cataracts, acute macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, as well as other systemic health issues like thyroid disease, brain tumours and high blood pressure. The comprehensive eye exam can serve as an important first step in determining a person's current level of vision, the cause of any sight loss and, when applicable, establishing a treatment plan.

“We know that 1 in 4 children experience vision disorders<sup>3</sup>, 1 in 9 Canadians develop irreversible vision loss by age 65 and 1 in 4 by the age of 75<sup>4</sup>,” according to Dr. Michael Nelson, President of the Association. “As primary eye care providers, CAO's more than 5000 member optometrists are uniquely well-positioned to deliver cost-effective early detection, prevention, and treatment of eye diseases and disorders facilitated by a comprehensive eye exam.”

So today, join people around the world and put your #VisionFirst by booking a visit to your optometrist for a comprehensive eye exam!

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### **About the Canadian Association of Optometrists**

The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) is the national voice of optometry, dedicated to collaboratively advancing the highest standard of primary eye care through the promotion of optimal eye health and vision care. For more information, go to [opto.ca](http://opto.ca).

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<sup>1</sup> Boure, R A et al., [\*Magnitude, temporal trends and projections of the global prevalence of blindness and distance and near vision impairment: a systematic review and meta-analysis\*](#), August 2, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. Blindness and vision impairment fact sheet. October 11, 2018. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/blindness-and-visual-impairment>

<sup>3</sup> The National Coalition for Vision Health. 2011. Vision Loss in Canada. Accessed July 11, 2016 at [http://www.cos-sco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/VisionLossinCanada\\_e.pdf](http://www.cos-sco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/VisionLossinCanada_e.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

