World Sight Day Grand Rounds:
Cataract Blindness Elimination Panel Discussion
Hosted by the Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute, Department of Ophthalmology at Columbia University Medical Center – Presented by HelpMeSee
09 October 2014, 4:00PM – 6:00PM

Location
The Louis and Gloria Flanzer Amphitheatre
Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute
Department of Ophthalmology
635 W. 165th Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10032

World Sight Day – Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology & HelpMeSee
Dr. Daniel Kirby, the late eye surgeon and former Eye Institute faculty member at Columbia, once wrote that cataract surgery “has an absolute fascination and challenge for those whose special vocation in life it is.” With that same spirit in mind, Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology and HelpMeSee will host a special World Sight Day Grand Rounds panel discussion to shed light on the worldwide issue of cataract blindness and what can be done about it. Our experts from across the field will discuss sustainable high quality treatment solutions, high technology training advancements, large scale monitoring and evaluation of outcomes, and collaborative outreach by institutions and governments from the US and abroad. The theme of this year’s World Sight Day, “Universal Eye Health,” and its call to action, “No More Avoidable Blindness,” speaks directly to the challenge of cataracts, by far the largest cause of preventable blindness.

Background – Cataract Blindness
The WHO estimates there are over 20 million poor people in the developing world suffering from treatable bilateral cataract blindness with almost 170 million visually impaired. They are untreated because of the severe shortage of skilled cataract specialists available to provide low cost treatment to the poor.

Cataracts burden entire communities, depriving loved ones the ability to see, to work and to care for their families creating severe social burdens on families, their caretakers and communities The economic burden of untreated is huge, an estimated $1 trillion PER Year in lost GDP. Yet there is a scalable, sustainable, high-quality solution to this global crisis that will be discussed. Through public healthcare collaborations, innovational training methods that provide scale, dedicated institutions and
active individuals can help achieve a goal that will impact millions of people around the world – no more avoidable blindness.

**Topics of interest**
- Collect better evidence on the magnitude and prevalence of cataract disease in the developing world.
- Train thousands of highly skilled cataract specialists to provide sustainable high quality, high volume procedures to first eliminate the blindness backlog, then to attack visual impairment.
- Provide comprehensive cataract care services and integrate them into existing or developing healthcare systems.
- Identify and eliminate social and economic obstacles, particularly for the poor

**Event Structure**
Traditional to Ground Rounds, this panel will be subject to questions and discussions from the audience members during the entire event. The moderator will be tasked with keeping the relative topics at the forefront of discussions and pertinent to each individual speaker allowing each to weigh in on questions/topics of interest generated by the audience and among other speakers.

*Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology & HelpMeSee: Grand Rounds Event Schedule*

4:00 – 4:30  *Tea at the Renfield Conference Room – Eye Institute, Suite 538 (5th Floor)*

4:30 – 5:30  *Cataract Blindness Elimination Panel*
**Moderator**  Dr. George A. (Jack) Cioffi, Chair of Ophthalmology, Columbia University
**Speakers**  Mohan J. Thazhathu, President and CEO, HelpMeSee  James T. Ueltschi, Chairman and Treasurer, HelpMeSee  Dr. Glenn Strauss, Chief Medical Officer, HelpMeSee  Dr. Lama Al-Aswad, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, Columbia University
**Topics**  High Quality, High Volume Surgical Delivery at Affordable Prices  Simulator-Based Training to Surgical Proficiency  Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery - Evidence-Based Practice; Safe, Effective Care  Public Policy and Regulation on Treatment of Blindness and Care  Public Healthcare Collaboration Announcement between Columbia Department of Ophthalmology and HelpMeSee

5:30 – 6:00  *Closing Remarks/ Interaction with Audience and Media Interviews Granted*

**Audience**
Present at this event will be Columbia University attendees; external members of the ophthalmology community; public policy advocates (local, state, and federal government officials); major foundations focused on the problem of blindness; local and international press; and other key partners of the HelpMeSee campaign. Dr. Kirby’s grandson, Jeffrey Mullen, serves as a Board Member of HelpMeSee and will also be in attendance.