

## **L V Prasad Eye Institute partners with Standard Chartered to improve eye care delivery**



Dr. G. N. Rao, (2nd from left) Chair, L V Prasad Eye Institute & Ms. Karuna Bhatia, (2nd from right) Head of Sustainability - India & South Asia, Corporate Affairs, Standard Chartered Bank, Mumbai; unveiling the plaque of Futuristic Vision Centre - the Technology-Enabled Primary Eye Care Services; being jointly launched by L V Prasad Eye Institute in partnership with Standard Chartered, at a press conference on Thursday at L V Prasad Eye Institute, Banjara Hills. Also seen (L-R) are Dr Rohit Khanna, Director - GPR International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eye Care, LVPEI; Dr Srinivas Marmamula, Associate Director, Public Health Research & Training, LVPEI & Mr. V Rajashekar, Executive Director - GPR International Centre for Advancement of Rural Eye Care, LVPEI.

L V Prasad Eye Institute in partnership with Standard Chartered today launched two new programmes to improve eye care delivery – the **“Standard Chartered-LVPEI Programme for Eye Care Education”** and **“Technology-Enabled Primary Eye Care Services”**.

With the evolution of technology and the changing eye care situation, there is a growing need to scale-up primary eye care services by leveraging technology. This need has led to the evolution of technology-enabled “Primary Eye care Vision Centre” or the “Futuristic Vision Centre” model. The model extends the scope of existing vision centres, an LVPEI innovation developed at LVPEI, and is intended to target detection of all chronic eye conditions that are currently beyond the realm of primary eye care. The proposed futuristic model is envisaged to bring about a paradigm shift in the way the eye care is delivered at the primary level.

The Vision Centre concept is an innovative eye care service delivery model developed by L V Prasad Eye Institute nearly 25 years ago. The primary

goal of the Vision Centre is to provide basic eye care including detecting common blinding eye conditions, correction of refractive errors and appropriate referral of complex cases to the next level. Currently, the LVPEI vision centre network comprises of 180 primary centres spread across the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha and Karnataka.

The proposal on the futuristic Vision Centre model is approved by Standard Chartered Bank and the partnership envisages establishing 58 futuristic such centres across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, and Karnataka from 2019 through 2023. The first of the 58 Futuristic Vision Centres is scheduled to be operational in the first week of October 2019. It is estimated that over 0.5 million will benefit annually through these futuristic vision centres, once established.

Commenting on the programme, **Dr Gullapalli N Rao, Founder and Chair, L V Prasad Eye Institute** said, "Each technology enabled vision centre is expected to examine 5000 patients per annum. More importantly, close to 20% of those who are currently being referred, need not be referred, as enhanced services are available in the vision centre itself. This is expected to not only expedite eye care delivery at the primary level, but also bring about a substantial indirect cost saving to the patients and to the community at large."

The other programme that was launched by the partnership pertains to LVPEI's goal of developing a high quality, pan India eye care education framework to address the burden of visual impairment in India. The project will create an innovative and replicable model for high quality eye care education. Approximately 20,000 eye care professionals will benefit through various training programmes offered under the project's combined endeavour in three years. It will generate employment for the young and underprivileged sections of the society. The project will be able to provide quality eye health services to a population of over 3.6 million.

Vision impairment is a public health problem of global proportions affecting 253 million people across the world. Ninety percent of those affected by blindness and severe vision impairment live in the developing countries of the world, where healthcare resources and infrastructure are limited or poorly distributed. The problem of access and affordability can be tackled only through systematic, long-term efforts that result in widespread availability of high-quality facilities for eye care delivered by people who have the technical skills and the compassion to handle diverse population segments.

In line with L V Prasad Eye Institute's (LVPEI's) pyramidal model of eye care service delivery, the institute focuses on building a strong work force of eye care professionals across all cadres through its range of education programmes. LVPEI has thus far been able to train over 20,000 eye health care aspirants across India and the world. To address the magnitude of the problem of blindness and visual impairment, there is a need to overhaul, multiply and scale up the Institute's educational programmes.

Speaking about partnership's goals for education, **Karuna Bhatia, Head of Sustainability, Standard Chartered Bank, India**, said, "The scarcity of well-trained eye care personnel of all cadres being a major barrier to the elimination of avoidable blindness, the '**Standard Chartered – LVPEI Programme for Eye Care Education**' envisages building a programme to create an empowered workforce of high-quality eye care professionals to meet the eye care needs to combat blindness and visual impairment in India. A concurrent objective is to provide professional careers to youth from disadvantaged communities."

LVPEI's collaboration with Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) began early this year and the project duration is for three years (2019 – 2022). With the help of the existing team of ophthalmic educators (dedicated recruits for this project), LVPEI aims to revamp all existing training programmes and create new training offerings, develop a resource centre at Hyderabad for capacity building to train all levels of eye care professionals, and strengthen continuing medical and non-medical education.

As part of its sustainability strategy, Standard Chartered Bank has done more than 14million cost-effective eye care interventions through 125 Vision Centres across 22 states, provided training to nearly 17,000 community healthcare workers, supported 3.7 million cataract surgeries, 1.9 million refractive surgeries and other sight restoring surgeries.

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