



Illinois College of Optometry 150th Anniversary Campaign: Committed to Your Vision

Vision plays a critical role in an individual's physical, cognitive and social development. It is how we navigate the world and recognize everything we care for and comprehend. Our eyes introduce us to what is understood by the mind and felt by the heart.

**2 BILLION
WORLDWIDE**
affected by
vision impairment

Yet, we take the gift of sight for granted. The Center for Disease Control lists visual impairment as one of the leading causes of disability in America. More than 80% of the vision problems faced by millions today can be corrected with the appropriate lens prescription, and a vast majority of debilitating eye diseases are preventable if caught in time. All too often, many individuals wait until vision is already compromised before seeking out the care they need. For marginalized populations, lack of access to care and/or inadequate insurance to meet the most basic needs further compounds health outcomes.

The Illinois College of Optometry (ICO) has been at the forefront of teaching and training future optometrists to be best prepared for the challenges of the profession. Dr. Henry Olin, a noted eye and ear specialist of his time, founded the first school of optometry in 1872 and laid the groundwork for what ICO has become today.

**1 in 5
OPTOMETRISTS
IN AMERICA**
is an
ICO Graduate

Dr. Olin's main goal was to expand the educational experience of physicians in specialized areas, particularly the eye and ear. He was later joined by Dr. James Burton McFatrach, a prominent physician specializing in eye disease, and together they designed a new paradigm of ophthalmic education.

After 150 years, their vision, replicated by optometry programs and colleges worldwide, remains at the heart of ICO's mission and forms the three pillars — Research and Education, Patient Care, and Service to Community — that guide our vision for excellence and bolster our **commitment to your vision.**

As the oldest, continuously operating school of optometry in the nation, ICO has many reasons to be proud — with more than 8,000 alumni, ICO boasts the largest alumni base of any optometric institution. In fact, one in five practicing



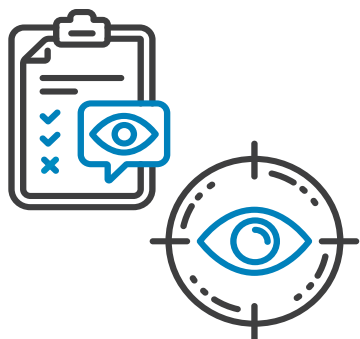
optometrists in the US and Canada is an ICO alum. Furthermore, ICO students have one of the highest placement rates in the country and are highly sought after because of the education and training they receive.

In 2022, we celebrate our sesquicentennial. Throughout the year, ICO will pay homage to its founding principles and our tremendous accomplishments as we enter a new period of growth and change.

But we cannot rest on our laurels.

ICO's 150th is an opportunity to redouble our commitment to remain at the forefront of teaching, training, discovery and healthcare delivery. We remain committed to our patients, our students, and the optometric profession.

We remain committed to your vision.



1 in 5
OPTOMETRISTS
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THE THREE PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

1: Education and Research

ICO: THE LEADING OPTOMETRIC INSTITUTION FOR SCIENCE AND DISCOVERY. FOCUSED ON EDUCATION, SCHOLARLY, AND RESEARCH ACTIVITY. INVESTING IN STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY AND PROGRAMS FOR TOMORROW'S OPTOMETRISTS.

What ICO students receive, beyond the best scientific and practical education available, is an appreciation of the gift of vision and eye health, and what a privilege custodianship of that gift is, especially in a world where access to eye care is increasingly important.

Every future optometrist commits to the rigors of instruction and practice that make an ICO education unique and valuable. At the Dr. Newton K. Welsey Research Center, our work in ophthalmic science continues to move the everyday practice of vision care forward. ICO's faculty work hand-in-hand with students and patients, leading the profession in making new discoveries – like breakthroughs in myopia management and studying juvenile onset of meibomian gland dysfunction – caused by increased device usage and virtual learning. Their research has pushed optometric science forward.

To meet the demands of new advances in technology and optometric care delivery, the Illinois Eye Institute (IEI), the patient care division of the college, will be investing in capital upgrades to make those advances more accessible to our doctors, residents, and students, and thereby improving patient health outcomes. Investment in a new research center and student services is just a part of our commitment to the profession, our patients, and the next generation of optometrists who will greatly impact the profession for years to come.

GOAL \$1.5MM

Research Center (capital)	\$800K
Scholarships & Awards	\$500K
Programs	\$200K



at the **Illinois
Eye Institute,**
35,000
unique patients
90,000
patient visits



THE THREE PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

2: Patient Care

OPTOMETRISTS: THE INDEPENDENT PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF THE EYE AND MEETING THE OPHTHALMIC NEEDS OF CHICAGO'S MOST VULNERABLE PATIENT POPULATIONS.

The reality of vision and eye health in America:

- Half of the 61 million American adults at risk of severe vision loss haven't had a comprehensive eye exam in the last 12 months.
- 4 million Americans over 40 now suffer from permanent vision loss and blindness. By 2030, that number is expected to double due to the increase in chronic illnesses that affect eye health.
- 14 million Americans at least 12 years old have some form of untreated visual impairment, 80% of which can be treated with corrective lenses.

With world renowned faculty specializing in aging patients, pediatric and binocular vision disorders, ocular surface disease, contact lenses and advanced care related to vitreoretinal disease, glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmic disorders, cataracts, cornea and external eye disease and other disorders of the eye, the IEI is the premier vision care facility in the region, and the largest safety-net provider of eye care for Chicago's underserved populations. Each year, the IEI provides primary and advanced eye care to an estimated 35,000 unique patients, yet experiences well over 90,000 patient visits annually, representing a large percentage of the population with advanced ophthalmic care needs.

The vast majority of the IEI's patients are racially diverse, primarily low-income and medically underserved. The IEI's Vision of Hope program helps to underwrite care for nearly 65% of the patient population who are un/underinsured. Eye and vision care would be unavailable to many without this program.

GOAL \$750K

Programs **\$500K**
Capital **\$250K**

THE THREE PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

3: Service to Our Community

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION WITHIN ICO AND THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

To address the low numbers of optometrists from underrepresented minority populations, ICO is investing in programs, scholarships and awards to increase our number of Black, African American, and Latino students. Culturally competent delivery of care improves health outcomes, and ICO remains committed to training



optometrists who understand our patients' experiences, especially as the IEI delivers care to Chicago's most marginalized communities.

More than 50% of the institution's staff come from the local community, providing job opportunities to our neighbors in the city we call home.

To the surrounding communities, the IEI partners with more than 35 health and social services organizations to ensure access to care for our underserved neighborhoods, and through our partnership with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Chicago Department of Public Health, the IEI provides primary and advanced eye care services to more than 7,000 underserved children and youth, providing the necessary eye and vision care so children can be successful. CPS knows what we've always understood: healthier students means better outcomes in school and beyond.

There is no ICO without the community it serves, and in this capacity, we are proud of the work we've done, while acknowledging the need to do more.

GOAL **\$250K** Programs **\$125K**
Scholarships **\$125K**

ICO has graduated
APPROXIMATELY
16,300
OPTOMETRISTS
since 1925

Why your support matters.

For the past 150 years, ICO has evolved from a school helping to craft a branch of medical practice in its infancy into being the leading optometric educational institution in North America. Our legacy of innovation in the science we produce and the care we provide makes our students better doctors, and our patients healthier people.

We cannot fulfill the highest aspirations of our institution and our profession without the support of the ICO community – individuals like you who believe in our mission of delivering the best vision care to everyone – from the doctors we train to the patients we care for.

To attain these goals, and “strive to seek that all will receive optimal healthcare” – your investment and your commitment are vital, in ICO's 150th year and beyond.

Please consider making a gift to the Illinois College of Optometry and the Illinois Eye Institute, and show your support for the future of vision and eye health and education, and the people who make that possible.

ICO is committed to a future we see clearly. We hope you'll choose to be a part of that legacy, and that future.

Thank you.