

## **Cambodia Mission 2017**

### **1. Background**

Approximately, 28,000 Cambodians get blind each year, with more than half due to cataracts and the rest due to uncorrected vision, glaucoma, corneal scarring and pterygium. 80%-90% of these cases are treatable and preventable. However, with only 38 ophthalmologists for a population of 15 million people and less than 60% of these doing surgery, Cambodia has one of the lowest numbers of ophthalmologists per capita in the world.

Cambodia International Sight Association (CISA) is an NGO co-founded by the late Dr Kim Frumar, an ophthalmologist who until last year did outreach missions operating on Cambodia's poor people. Dr Frumar's co-founder is Sean Ngu, the Cambodian Secretary of State. Kim's vision was to not just treat patients but to teach the Cambodians so they can one day look after their own people. To further this cause, Teresa De Leon (Dr Frumar's partner) has established a scholarship for a Cambodian ophthalmologist to do an overseas fellowship so that on his/her return, they can be the next generation teachers. The residency education for Ophthalmology is currently carried out by visiting doctors from Australia, New Zealand and Netherlands. One day, Cambodians will be independent with their training program.

In August 2016, a group of Australian volunteers (5 ophthalmologists and 7 optometrists) completed a mission operating in Phnom Penh on 430 Cambodian poor people from all over the country. By having a centralised facility, they were able to use the latest technology (because of stable electricity and clean facilities) and teach the local doctors and medical students. They need teaching and practice, practice, practice.

This model was such a success that the Cambodian Government are providing a campus to set up teaching facilities and a day surgery. This campus will be open in July 2017 and will be able to be used for ophthalmology training programs and a school of optometry will be set up.

Further information on the Cambodia international sight association (Cisa) Facebook page

### **2. Purpose of Mission**

Your involvement in Cambodia Mission 2017 can make a big difference in that whilst you are in Cambodia you can carry out surgery on needy patients, as well as teach ophthalmology residents and local specialists. You will conduct Phaco surgery, small incision cataract surgery and surgery on pterygiums as well as teach and train the local doctors.

### **3. Local Training and Support**

There has been a new development in Cambodian ophthalmology that this mission and future ones can assist in a big way and will be greatly appreciated by the local doctors. The Prime Minister has decreed that there will no longer be any limits to the number of specialists that can be trained. The Cambodia resident training program was graduating around 4-5 every year and the numbers are expected to soar to around 30-35. That is 4-5 graduates a year for a population of 15 million people.

This mission initiative is being driven by Sean Ngu, the Secretary of State for Cambodia and Teresa de Leon through CISA. The Secretary of Education and Training is providing the campus. Sean meets with the British and Australian Ambassadors regularly as part of his cabinet portfolio and they are supportive. The Cambodian Royal Family have also been very supportive, with a Prince and Princess being part of the CISA Board.

Teresa De Leon is the point of contact in Australia and was involved in the 2016 mission. She can co-ordinate with CEO Dr Meng at the Khmer Soviet Hospital in Phnom Penh, which is where the mission was held in 2016. Dr Meng is also accountable for Cambodia's eye care program and reports to the Minister of Health.

#### **4. Facilities**

During the 2016 mission, 3 theatres at the Khmer Soviet Hospital were used to treat 430 patients. One room had 3 operating beds with 3 Phaco machines. The second room had 2 operating beds and these can be for small-incision cataracts. One room was just for pterygium.

The new facility will have one refurbished theatre with enough space for 8 operating tables. Planning is currently underway for renovations and the configuration may change.

If the 2017 mission takes place prior to July, surgery will be carried out at the Khmer Soviet Friendship Hospital.

#### **5. Suggested Programme (provisional)**

At this stage, we are organising one or two weeks in either May and/or October/November 2017.

There is a team of local optometrists and ophthalmologists that will screen the patients. Local theatre nurses will be available but they would benefit from training from UK nurses who may be part of the mission.

Local medical students will be used for translation.

Over a 5 day period, the suggested programme is to have 4 days surgery and a 1 day medical conference for local ophthalmologists and residents. Our aim would be to see up to 10-25 patients per table per day, with numbers dependent on training. We will finalise the programme once we have the number of surgeons who have committed to the mission.

#### **6. Your Commitment**

Pick up at the airport, accommodation at a local boutique hotel, food and minibus transport between hotel and hospital will be provided by CISA.

One full week of surgery and teaching would be requested.

You would need to make provisions for your travel fares, travel insurance and all other personal requirements and sightseeing.