



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 18, 2019

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Bob Russ</b><br/>Director of Communications and<br/>Human Resources<br/>Miracles In Sight<br/>O: 336.765.0932, x1400<br/><a href="mailto:bruss@miraclesinsight.org">bruss@miraclesinsight.org</a></p> | <p><b>Aleasha Vuncannon</b><br/>The Reuben Rink Co.<br/>C: 336.465.0405<br/><a href="mailto:aleasha@reubenrink.com">aleasha@reubenrink.com</a></p> |
|---|--|

## MIRACLES IN SIGHT HOSTS LATIN AMERICAN SURGEONS FOR WET LAB

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. – [Miracles In Sight](#) (MIS) hosted 22 surgeons from Latin America at its eye bank in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The surgeons were part of the first-ever International Duke-Latin America Workshop held April 1 – 2 and sponsored by Mexico-based Sophia Pharmaceutical Labs. Surgeons representing 11 Latin American countries participated in a wet lab and gained valuable hands-on experience working with DMEK, DSAEK and PKP surgical techniques.

“The best way to create bridges between institutions is through education,” shared Victor Perez, M.D., professor of ophthalmology at Duke University School of Medicine, who organized the educational exchange. Perez, who is from Puerto Rico, wanted to give Latin American surgeons new tools and techniques to expand their programs in their countries.

The two-day workshop included a full day of lectures and case presentations on cornea, ocular surface, transplantation and immunology at Duke before the surgeons traveled to Miracles In Sight for the wet lab and a tour of the eye bank on April 2. Led by Kristen Peterson, M.D., Cornea Fellow at Duke and MIS Cornea Fellow, and Terry Semchyshyn, M.D., associate medical director for MIS and the Duke Eye Center, the surgeons learned DMEK, DSAEK and PKP surgical techniques; DMEK and DSAEK tissue preparation; and donor eye prep and recovery.

“Extending the reach of our mission and meeting new surgeons from across Latin America was a tremendous benefit for Miracles In Sight,” said MIS Director of Research and Development Isaac Perry. “They met us, saw our operations and experienced the quality and care that we put into making transplantation a reality.”

One of the five stations during the wet lab focused on tissue preparation. Dee Hatcher, who manages client education and marketing for MIS, shared that any time surgeons can experience the day-to-day operations of an eye bank helps narrow gaps in understanding.

--more--

“Anytime we can educate doctors on procedures and show them what we do helps them understand and appreciate the process. When they can see what we do firsthand, it is a good thing,” she said.

While DMEK and other procedures are growing in the United States, surgeons in Latin America do not have access to tissue or tissue preparation. Perez says that it can be a big jump for surgeons and the wet lab eased what can be a steep learning curve for surgical procedures like DMEK.

Within a week following the lab, several of the surgeons were already applying the DMEK techniques they learned at MIS.

“Miracles In Sight represents the true spirit of eye banking not only in the United States but in the world. We are so thankful to them for not only providing tissue but also their leadership in helping these countries move forward in tissue preparation,” added Perez who is already eyeing a second workshop based on the successful outcome of this event.

“This experience really brings back home our mission and is a good reminder on the humanity behind what we do and how our mission can make a difference in the lives of people,” said Perry. “We learned a lot about how to put on these types of events so it was a learning experience for MIS. We can now take wet labs anywhere in the world.”

#### **[About Miracles In Sight](#)**

Miracles In Sight (formerly the North Carolina Eye Bank), based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA is one of the largest eye banks in the world. The mission of Miracles In Sight is to support the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of sight through transplant, research, education and innovation. A significant part of this mission is stewardship focused on training and educating the medical community and supporting partners and organizations around the world. For more information, visit [www.miraclesinsight.org](http://www.miraclesinsight.org).

###