By 2020, there are projected to be 280 million people suffering from vision loss worldwide. This number equals the population of the entire United States minus the populations of North Carolina and South Carolina.

Promising steps and outcomes have been discovered through basic, translational and clinical research in various labs on the UNC campus, where collaborations are creating an efficient exchange of knowledge on both stem cell and gene therapy research.

A Campaign Advisory Board was established at UNC Eye, consisting of grateful patients and friends of UNC Eye and the Kittner Eye Center. The members of the Campaign Advisory Board have all committed to be ambassadors for UNC Eye in their networks and have pledged to help increase support toward research at UNC Eye.

Throughout the board’s first meeting on November 7, 2014, a research overview was presented by Chairman Donald Budenz, MD, Research faculty members Sai Chavala, MD, Terete Borras, PhD and Matt Hirsch, PhD. Each presenter provided a glimpse of promising recent discoveries at UNC Eye on glaucoma and macular degeneration.

Thanks to our grateful patients and friends who agreed to serve on our board and to all our donors who contribute to our mission. Your support provides hope and promise for the overcoming of suffering from blindness and low vision now and for future generations.

We invite all readers of UNC Eye to share the gift of hope by becoming an Eye Research Partner.

For any questions or assistance on the various ways to donate to UNC Eye, please call UNC Eye Development Director, Sandy Scarlett at 919-943-1299 or e-mail her at Sandy_Scarlett@med.unc.edu.
Chair’s Corner

This edition of the UNC Eye Newsletter highlights our growth in the areas of clinical care, education, and research. Dry eye disease is a very prevalent and bothersome problem that requires detective work to get to the underlying causes and appropriate treatments. The creation of the UNC Dry Eye Center is meant to provide patients with dry eye disease the appropriate diagnostic and treatment options that the disease requires. Too often, dry eye patients are given a bottle of artificial tears to use without much thought as to the origin and proper solution to the problem. By having dedicated faculty, staff, and equipment to identify and treat the root cause of the dry eye symptoms, dry eye patients will get the care they deserve. Led by our two experts in diseases of the ocular surface and cornea, Rich Davis, MD, and Neil Chungfat, MD, MS, the UNC Dry Eye Center will become a referral center for difficult dry eye patients. Additionally, this issue of the newsletter describes our new Ocular Oncology Service, which is a collection of subspecialists from different areas who focus on the treatment of ocular and periocular tumors. Working closely with physicians from the world-renowned Lineberger Cancer Center, UNC Eye will be able to diagnose and treat the most serious of eye diseases.

The UNC Eye residency program has successfully trained several generations of future ophthalmologists, who go on to serve the people of North Carolina and beyond. Because of the growing elderly population in the US, there is a need for more eye physicians and surgeons. UNC Eye is responding to this need by expanding the residency training program from three residents each of three years to four. Our first class of four residents started in July. Typical of our residency classes, half of these trainees are from North Carolina. Once trained, these eye physicians are more likely to stay and serve the people of North Carolina and beyond. North Carolina. Once trained, these eye physicians are more likely to stay and serve the people of North Carolina and beyond.

In addition, UNC Eye is now training subspecialists in glaucoma and cornea/external diseases in addition to retina and ocuplastics surgery. These fellowship trainees go on to manage difficult eye diseases referred by general ophthalmologists and optometrists.

Lastly, with the addition of Zongchao Han, MD, PhD, UNC Eye has assembled a team of five Ocular Gene Therapy research scientists working on innovative treatments for inherited diseases of the eye. In collaboration with the UNC Gene Therapy Center, UNC Vector Core, and Carolina Nanomedicine Institute, our Ocular Gene Therapy program is developing cures for glaucoma, macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, retinoblastoma, inherited corneal disease, and central nervous system diseases that affect vision. Steve Gray, PhD, is currently leading a human clinical trial in conjunction with the NIH treating Giant Axonal Neuropathy and other gene therapy treatments are approaching human clinical trials.

I invite you to learn more about these exciting programs and consider partnering with us through charitable giving. You can become a participant in our mission of preventing and curing eye diseases through clinical care, education, or research by contacting me at donald_budenz@med.unc.edu or our Development Director, Sandy Scarlett at Sandy_Scarlett@med.unc.edu. Thank you for your support of UNC Eye!

So enjoy this issue of our newsletter. I would encourage you to contact me if you would like to find out more about our efforts and how you might partner with us.

Donald L. Budenz, MD, MPH
Kittner Family Distinguished Professor and Chairman
UNC Eye Care Center

Kittner Eye Center Faculty

BY AREA OF SPECIALTY

Comprehensive Ophthalmology
Kathleen Gordon, MD

Contact Lens / Optometry
J. Bruce Baldwin, OD, PhD
Michael Marino, OD
Nikki Robertson, OD

Medical Retina
Seema Garg, MD, PhD
Michael Marino, OD

Pediatric Ophthalmology
Kathleen Gordon, MD

Neuro-Ophthalmology
David A. Chesonrud, MD

Ocular Oncology
Odette M. Houghton, MD
Kathleen Gordon, MD
Kevin Gertsch, MD
Renzo Zaldivar, MD

Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Renzo Zaldivar, MD
Amy M. Fowler, MD

Pediatric Ophthalmology and Adult Strabismus
Natario Couser, MD
Kevin Gertsch, MD

Refractive Surgery
Neil Chungfat, MD, MS
Michael Marino, OD
Karl G. Stonecipher, MD

Uveitis
Neil Chungfat, MD, MS
Maurice B. Landers III, MD

Vitreo-Retinal Surgery
Odette M. Houghton, MD
J. Niklas Ulrich, MD

Scientific Research
Tereza Borras, PhD
Donald L. Budenz, MD, MPH
Sai H. Chavala, MD
Richard M. Davis, MD
Seema Garg, MD, PhD
Steven Gray, PhD
Josh Greger, PhD
Zongchao Han, PhD, MD
Matthew Hirsch, PhD
Odette M. Houghton, MD
O’Rease J. Knight, MD
Scott D. Lawrence, MD
Jean-Claude Mwanza, MD, MPH, PhD

Locations and how to reach us:

Kittner Eye Center
All Services Provided
UNC Optical Shop
Eyewear
Community Low Vision Center
Low vision patient services
2208 Nelson Highway, Ste 200
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
Kittner Eye Center Phone:
Appointments: 984-974-2020
Fax: 925-966-6482
Optical Shop Phone:
984-974-2039 / Fax 925-966-1908
Contact Lens Phone: 919-966-2067
Community Low Vision Center Phone:
919-955-9564
Appointments: 984-974-2020

Unc Surgical Services at Chatham Hospital
Cataract, Glaucoma, Retina
163 Medical Park Dr.
Suite 110
Siler City, NC 27344
Phone: 919-799-4050
Fax: 919-799-4051
Appointments: 919-799-4050

Unc Eye at Roxboro
Cataract
Person Memorial Hospital
615 Ridge Road
Roxboro, NC 27573
Phone: 331-599-2121
Appointments: 984-974-2020

Main Administrative Offices
5151 Bioinformatics Building, CB #7040
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7040
Phone: 919-966-5296
Fax: 919-966-1908
Appointments: 984-974-2020

Services also provided at the following:

Alamance Eye Center
Plastics & Reconstruction
1016 Kingpatrick Rd
Burlington, NC 27215

Amy Fowler, MD
Phone: 919-304-3937
Appointments: 336-228-0254 or 1-800-858-7905 (toll free)

Watson Eye Associates
Retina Services
400 Nash Medical Arts Mall
Rocks Mount, NC 27804

Odette Houghton, MD
Maurice Landers, MD
Phone / Appointments: 252-443-1006
UNC Eye Expanding to Wake County, NC

In Spring 2015, UNC Eye will open a new location in Holly Springs, NC. Holly Springs is in southern Wake County, NC (population 974,000), just a short ride southwest of Raleigh, roughly 45 miles north of Fayetteville.

This new location will provide patients in Wake County with convenient access to UNC Eye’s world-class eye care with a hometown touch in four clinical ophthalmic specialties.

UNC Eye Holly Springs will be conveniently located at the corner of Avent Ferry Road and Hwy 55. In affiliation with Rex UNC Health Care, this location already provides a multitude of healthcare services to meet every family’s healthcare needs, in one convenient location for the growing population of southern Wake County.

Han Joins UNC Eye Scientific Research Faculty

Zongchao Han, PhD, MD has joined UNC Eye as an Assistant Research Professor. He currently also serves as a member of the Carolina Institute for NanoMedicine and Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center at UNC.

Prior to joining UNC Eye, Dr. Han spent approximately six years as an assistant professor of research at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in the Department of Cell Biology, working in the field of ocular and vision neuroscience gene therapy.

The Han Research Laboratory at UNC Eye is interested in developing gene therapies for inherited blinding diseases. Dr. Han’s research interests cover the design and development of nonviral DNA nanoparticle vectors capable of transferring genetic cargos to target ocular cells in developing effective gene-based therapeutics.

Dr. Han has authored more than thirty-seven publications and has published 5 book chapters. His lab is currently supported by NIH and UNC startup funds.

Cabrera and Ulrich Travel to China to Continue Training Visiting Ophthalmologists

The last edition of UNC Eye featured a story that shared how UNC Eye faculty members Michelle Cabrera, MD and J. Niklas Ulrich, MD benefited from funding from North Carolina Lions to train a pair of visiting ophthalmologists from Gansu Province, China. The focus of the training was on the treatment of retinopathy of prematurity (ROP).

Becky Wang, MD and Jasmine Yi, MD spent three months in 2013 training under Dr. Cabrera and Dr. Ulrich at UNC Eye.

This past summer, Dr. Cabrera and Dr. Ulrich traveled to China to continue training Dr. Wang and Dr. Yi and some of their colleagues. We talked to Dr. Ulrich to learn more about their trip:

UNC Eye: What were the key learnings from your recent trip to China to lecture and help treat ROP?

J. Niklas Ulrich, MD: Our trip was a huge success. We operated, lectured and saw patients in clinics. We also visited a Children’s hospital where ROP screening is done and confirmed that they successfully instituted ROP screening at the University. Their pediatric ophthalmologists started sending us photos from all babies screened for our review and confirmation. There is an enormous need for ROP screening in China.

UNC Eye: Will you be going back again next year?

Dr. Ulrich: They already invited us back next year. They are planning on organizing a national conference and want us to speak and teach again.

UNC Eye: Will the ophthalmologists from China be coming back to work with you here?

Dr. Ulrich: I’m not sure. They would like to, but it is a question of funding and manpower.

UNC Eye: How many patients have they treated since your visit to China this past Summer?

Dr. Ulrich: The staff there successfully screened 50 patients since our visit in July and sent us photos to evaluate. They identified 5 babies with ROP and treated one, preventing the baby from going blind. They have collaborated with two other local hospitals that are referring critical babies to them for treatment.
Clinical Spotlight: UNC Eye Ocular Oncology Service

The UNC Eye Ocular Oncology Service provides diagnosis and treatment of cancer affecting the eye, the orbit, and cancer of the eyelids. The Ocular Oncology Service at UNC works in conjunction with the expert team of oncologists at UNC’s Lineberger Cancer Center.

The Ocular Oncology Service was established by Jonathan Dutton, M.D., Ph.D. in 2001 to provide the most up to date therapy for ophthalmic cancer patients in a caring and supportive atmosphere.

Through a multi-disciplinary approach, patients are given immediate access to ancillary testing and consultation with radiation therapy specialists, geneticists and a variety of surgical services as needed in order to ensure the highest standard of care.

Conditions treated include:
- Ocular Melanoma
- Retinoblastoma
- Ocular and Orbital Metastasis
- Tumors of the Eyelid, Orbit and Ocular Surface

Meet the New UNC Eye Ocular Oncology Team:

Odette Houghton, M.D.
Associate Professor
Intraocular Tumors
Education: M.D. Medical University of South Carolina
Residency: University of Michigan
Fellowship: Kresge Eye Institute
Special Interests: Ocular Oncology, Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy
Dr. Houghton also specializes in Vitreo Retinal Surgery, Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy, and Comprehensive Eye Disease.

Kathleen Gordon, M.D.
Education: M.D. Cornell University
Residency: Cornell University
Fellowship: Ocular Oncology, University of California
Special Interests: Ocular Oncology, Comprehensive Eye Disease
Dr. Gordon also specializes in Comprehensive Ophthalmology, Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy, and Comprehensive Eye Disease.

Kevin Gertsch, M.D.
Assistant Professor
Pediatric Ocular Oncology
Education: M.D. St. Louis University
Residency: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Fellowship: University of Iowa
Special Interests: Ocular Oncology
Dr. Gertsch also specializes in Pediatric Ophthalmology and Adult Strabismus.

Renzo Zaldivar, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor
Orbital Diseases
Education: M.D. Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine, Puerto Rico
Residency: Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education
Fellowship: Univ of Minnesota Med Center, Fairview
Special Interests: Ocular Oncology, Orbital and Lacrimal Diseases, Mohs Reconstruction
Dr. Zaldivar also specializes in Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

UNC Eye Announces Opening of Dry Eye Center

Dry eye disease (DED) is a significant problem in adults, affecting one in eight middle age and older Americans. Symptoms include foreign body sensation, burning, tearing, itching, and even decreased vision. Studies have confirmed that DED adversely affects a person’s quality of life by limiting a person’s ability to read comfortably, concentrate, operate a computer, drive, or even perform basic work tasks.

The diagnostic and therapeutic options are broad and include lack of tears, thin tears, local inflammatory diseases, allergies, and eyelid problems. For this reason, advanced testing and treatments beyond what the average eye care provider typically has in place are needed to properly diagnose and treat these disorders. Recognizing the prevalence and morbidity of dry eye disease, UNC Eye is establishing a sub-specialty clinic within the Kittner Eye Center, named the UNC Dry Eye Center.

Patients with diagnostic and therapeutic problems related to dry eye will be seen by sub-specialist ophthalmologists who have special training in sorting out the cause of the dry eye symptoms and providing specific management beyond the use of artificial tears, which is the usual approach. In addition, cutting edge research into the causes and best treatments for dry eye disease will be performed.

New diagnostic equipment to properly identify the cause of the dry eye symptoms will include Lipiview, Tearlab tear osmolarity and inflammatory factor testing, a confocal microscope, Optical Coherence Tomography imaging of the tear film, and Doctors Allergy Testing. Special management equipment and products, including Lipiflow, serum tears, and an entire line of specialized treatment products for different causes of dry eyes will be offered to patients once the underlying causes of the symptoms are carefully identified.

Finally, tracking the progress of patients will be performed with the UNC Dry Eye Management Scale (DEMS), a novel self-report measure that helps patients and doctors document improvement. “This reporting tool assesses patients’ symptoms and their effect on daily life over the past week”, said Richard Davis, M.D., developer of the UNC DEMS. “This patient-reported outcome was designed to be efficiently implemented in clinical practice and provides important information for both patients and providers about dry eye status and treatment effectiveness.”

The UNC Dry Eye Center will be led by Richard Davis, M.D. and Neil Chungfat, M.D., MS, both specialty trained in the evaluation and management of dry eye disease. To schedule an appointment for an evaluation, call the Kittner Eye Center at 984-974-2020.

The UNC DEMS can be downloaded at http://tinyurl.com/UNCDEMS.
UNC Health Care has introduced EPIC@UNC, an electronic medical record that makes it easier than ever for patients to access timely medical information and connect with their providers within UNC Health Care.

With EPIC@UNC comes a new online service - My UNC Chart - to help our patients stay connected to their care through one secure, easy-to-use online portal.

Visit https://myuncchart.org/mychart/ to:
• Manage your appointments
• Communicate with your doctor
• Access your test results
• Pay bills online
• Manage accounts of loved ones
• Request prescription refills
• Track your health
• Get the MyChart mobile app

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) named Budenz the recipient of its 2014 Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award, presented on Oct. 19, 2014 during the opening ceremony of the 2014 AAO Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL. The AAO is the largest national association of eye physicians and surgeons with over 25,000 US and 7,000 international members.

Since 1995, Budenz has devoted his professional skills to humanitarian work in Ghana, West Africa. He has traveled to Ghana several times each year since then, spending anywhere from one to three weeks operating on patients pro bono and teaching local ophthalmologists during each trip.

In 2009, Budenz established a 501(c) non-profit called Christian Eye Ministry, which supports two clinics in Ghana. He is also establishing a Glaucoma Center of Excellence in Ghana, which trains local ophthalmologists in this surgical subspecialty.

Along with his clinical work in Ghana, Budenz has also designed and published numerous studies on the epidemiology and clinical treatment of eye disease there. Among these is what has been called the first “properly designed” study of the epidemiology of glaucoma prevalence in West Africa. He is currently running two large studies, one designed to determine the incidence and outcomes of glaucoma in urban West Africa and the other designed to determine the optimal surgical procedure for glaucoma in this people group.

“I believe it is far more effective to choose an underserved area of the world to develop infrastructure, rather than to do one-week interventions or to go from place to place, which I call medical tourism. Sustainability and training are our goals.”

— Donald L. Budenz, MD, MPH

Budenz obtained his medical degree from Harvard Medical School and his Masters of Public Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health. In 2011, he relocated to Chapel Hill in order to fulfill the role of Chairman of the Ophthalmology Department here at UNC. He spent the first two decades of his career at the University of Miami. When he is not traveling, Dr. Budenz sees patients at the UNC Kittner Eye Center and also at another UNC satellite clinic in Roxboro.
UNCEYE 2014

UNC Eye Welcomes Six New Clinical Faculty Members
New physicians specialize in Cornea, Uveitis, Pediatric Ophthalmology, Glaucoma, Ophthalmic Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Contact Lens, and Ocular Oncology

Neil Chungfat, M.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor
Corneal Disease, External Disease, Uveitis, Cataract
Education: M.D. Northwestern University, M.S. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Residency: Northwestern University
Fellowship: University of California, San Francisco/Proctor Foundation
Special Interests: Refractive Surgery

Natario Couser, M.D., M.S.
Assistant Professor
Pediatric Ophthalmology and Adult Strabismus
Education: M.D. Virginia Commonwealth University; M.S. Johns Hopkins University
Residency: Emory University
Fellowship: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Special Interests: Ophthalmic Genetics, Retinopathy of Prematurity

Kevin Gertsch, M.D.
Assistant Professor
Pediatric Ophthalmology and Adult Strabismus
Education: M.D. St. Louis University
Residency: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Fellowship: University of Iowa
Special Interests: Ocular Oncology

O’Rese J. Knight, M.D.
Assistant Professor
Glaucoma, Cataract
Education: M.D. University of Miami
Residency: Case Western Reserve University
Fellowship: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Special Interests: Cataract

Nikki Robertson, O.D.
Assistant Professor
Optometry, Contact Lens
Education: O.D. Southern College of Optometry
Special Interests: Corneal Refractive Therapy (CRT) contact lenses

Renzo Zaldivar, M.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor
Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Ophthalmic Oncology
Education: M.D. Universidad Central del Caribe School of Medicine, Puerto Rico
Residency: Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education
Fellowship: Univ of Minnesota Med Center, Fairview
Special Interests: Orbital and Lacrimal Diseases, Mohs Reconstruction

UNC Eye clinical faculty are available to see patients in their areas of specialty at the UNC Kittner Eye Center. Call 984-974-2020 to schedule an appointment.

In Memoriam:
David Kittner (1918–2014)

David Kittner, of Jenkintown, PA, a long-time donor to UNC Eye, whose gifts named the Eye Center to honor his family, died in April 2014 at his home in Philadelphia, PA. He was a corporate attorney and longtime partner at Blank Rome L.L.P. in Philadelphia.

A native of North Carolina, Mr. Kittner graduated from Weldon (N.C.) High School in 1934 and went on to earn a business degree from the University of North Carolina in 1939 and a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1951. Between the two degrees, he was an accountant and served a short time in the Army at the Presidio in San Francisco.

Mr. Kittner set up a scholarship at UNC in his parents’ memory in 1988. Twenty years later, he endowed a fund to create the UNC Kittner Eye Center and then gave additional funds to establish a distinguished professorship in ophthalmology.

“Mr. Kittner was passionate about establishing a center of excellence in eye care that resulted in donations to establish the Kittner Eye Center and a Distinguished Professorship in Ophthalmology at UNC,” UNC Department of Ophthalmology Kittner Family Distinguished Professor and Chairman Donald L. Budenz, MD, MPH said. “He is missed by everyone whose lives he touched, but his legacy lives on here in Chapel Hill.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM KITTNER/ KITTNER.COM
Introducing the UNC Eye Resident Class of 2017:

Sylvia Groth, M.D.
Undergrad: Wheaton College
Major: BA, Business/Economics
Medical School: University of Minnesota
Internship: Presence St. Francis Hospital Transition Year Program, University of Illinois at Chicago
Outside interests: road cycling, long distance races (half-ironman, half marathons), golf (college varsity team), travel- backpacking and hiking

Kay Khine, M.D.
Undergrad: University of Southern California
Major: BA, Biology
Medical School: East Carolina University
Internship: Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Transition Year Program, Torrance, California
Outside Interests: Long distance running, powder-puff football, traveling, watching sports, photography (published)
Special note: Burmese - immigrated to US at age 11 and learned English after arriving

Tara McGehee, M.D.
Undergrad: University of Virginia
Major: BA, Neuroscience
Medical School: Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University
Internship: Medical College of Virginia Internal Medicine Program, Virginia Commonwealth University
Outside Interests: Spanish, salsa dancing, international travel, cooking.

Jennifer Williamson, M.D.
Undergrad: Duke University
Major: BS, Biology and History
Medical School: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Internship: New Hanover Regional Medical Center Internal Medicine Program, University of North Carolina
Outside Interests: Cooking/baking, history, canoeing, horseback riding, running

Where are they now?

2014 Senior Residents

Former Chief Resident Michael W. Compton, MD is currently in private practice at Wake Ophthalmology in Cary, NC.

Adam Dao, MD is currently a Cornea Fellow at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

David Fleischman, MD is a Glaucoma Fellow at Duke University.

2013 / 2014 Fellows:

Cornea Fellow Chelsea Lefebvre, MD is currently in private practice at Triangle Eye Physicians in Raleigh, NC.

Glaucoma Fellow O’Reese Knight, MD is currently full-time faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Plastics Fellow Brett Pariseau, MD is currently in private practice at the Peace Health Medical Group in Eugene, OR.
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Directions to UNC Kittner Eye Center

From West (Greensboro area):
• Drive east on Interstate 40 and take exit 273 for U.S. Highway 54 West.
• Turn right onto Highway 54 West.
• Turn right onto Huntingridge Rd at the second stoplight.
• Take an immediate right onto Nelson Highway.
• The Carolina Crossing building is two blocks up on the left.

From East (Raleigh area):
• Drive west on Interstate 40 and take exit 273A for U.S. Highway 54 West.
• Turn right onto Huntingridge Rd at the third stoplight.
• Take an immediate right onto Nelson Highway.
• The Carolina Crossing building is two blocks up on the left.

Directions from South (Pittsboro area):
• Drive north on U.S. Highway 15-501.
• Bear right on to U.S. Highway 54 east/15-501 north (towards Durham).
• Take the exit for U.S. Highway 54 East (also known as Raleigh Road).
• Before reaching Interstate 40 and Farrington Rd, turn left on Huntingridge Rd at the stoplight.
• Take immediate right onto Nelson Highway.
• The Carolina Crossing building is two blocks up on the left.