

**16th Annual
“Focus” on Vision Impairment &
Blindness Conference**
Meeting the Needs of Individuals with
Intellectual Disability & Vision Loss

October 1, 2024
8:00 am - 3:30 pm
Four Points by Sheraton, Norwood, MA



Keynote:

Nicole Ross, OD, MSc, FAAO, Dip. AAO (LV)
Associate Professor of Optometry
New England College of Optometry

**“Individualized Approaches in Examination of Functional
Vision and Vision Rehabilitation”**

Remarks at Lunch:

John Oliveira, Commissioner
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Awards at Lunch:

Mark Holt “Gift of Lunch”
Paul McDade “Focus” Award for Distinguished Service
Paul McDade “Focus” Award for Distinguished Leadership

“Focus” on Talent!!!

Special Closing Performance: M.A.I. Band

A Very Special Thank You

To Our Sponsors Including:

Lead Sponsors:

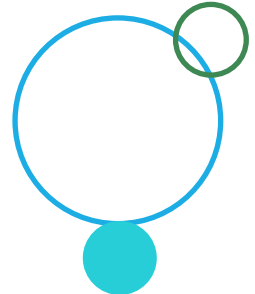
Department of Developmental Services
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Sponsors:

Perkins School for the Blind
DDS Southeast Region Training Council

Friends:

New England College of Optometry
Shriver Clinical Services



To Our Exhibitors Including:

BIAMA
Brava
Campus School at Boston College
Careforth
The Carroll Center for the Blind
Disabled Persons Protection Commission
Disability Resource Center
Federation for Children with Special Needs
Helen Keller National Center
Hope Clinical Care
Lifestream, Inc
MA Equipment Distribution Program
New England Low Vision and Blindness
Perkins Library
Perkins School for the Blind: The CVI Center at Perkins
State 911 Department
Therapro, Inc
Visiting Rehab and Nursing Services

Poster Displays



As I See It: The Deaf-Blind Immersion Experience at Home

Carmen Wise, Justice Resource Institute

Beyond the Eye: A Holistic Approach

Jacqueline O'Connell, New England College of Optometry

To Live, To Love, To Work and To Play

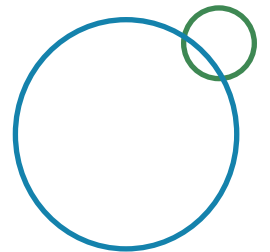
Amanda Brennen & Paula Honzik
Campus School at Boston College

Sing It, Play It: Using Music for Wellness, Community and Self-Expression

Lisa El-Lakis, DDS/Hogan Regional Center

Bon Appetit Brava

Wrentham Developmental Center



What Life Is Like Being Visually Impaired

Tabitha Mahan, and Nancy Michelson, Job Coach, HMEA

Assistive Technology and the AT Maker Lab: How Assistive Technology and 3D Printing can Assist Independence

Tiffany Miller, Easter Seals Massachusetts

Direct Care Providers: The Backbone of a Quality Life

Michela Meaney, COMS, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind



Introducing our Keynote:

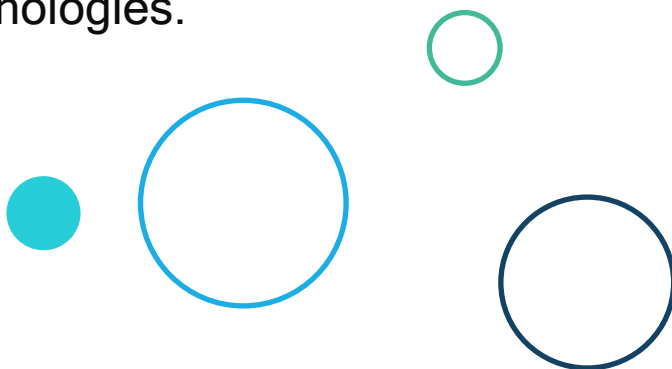
Nicole Ross, OD, MSc, FAAO, Dip. AAO (LV)

Dr. Nicole C. Ross is an Associate Professor of Optometry at the New England College of Optometry (NECO). She holds an OD and an MSc in Vision Science from NECO and has completed her residency in Vision Rehabilitation at Ohio State University, College of Optometry, and a fellowship at the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.



Dr. Ross sees patients at the NECO Center for Eye Care, the Perkins School for the Blind, and the Carroll Center for the Blind. Her academic roles include teaching Low Vision Rehabilitation and Advanced Ocular Disease classes. She is also a PhD candidate at Northeastern University, focusing on Psychology.

Dr. Ross's research interests are broad, encompassing ocular structure-function relationships, epidemiology of vision impairment, and the application of evidence-based clinical practice and translational research in vision testing and enhancement technologies.



Conference Agenda “At-a-Glance”

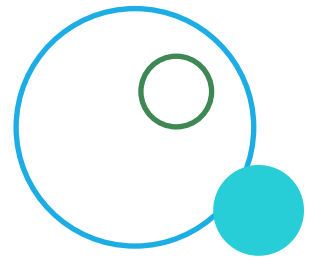


8:00 - 8:25	Registration / Vendors Open / Refreshments
8:30 - 8:45	Welcome Remarks
8:45 - 9:45	Keynote
9:45 - 10:00	Break / Exhibits Open
10:00 - 11:00	1 st Concurrent Session
11:00 - 11:15	Break / Exhibits Open
11:15 - 12:15	2 nd Concurrent Session
12:15 - 12:30	Exhibits Open
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch, Remarks, & Award Presentations: • Mark Holt Gift of Lunch • Paul McDade “Focus” Awards for Distinguished Service and Leadership
1:30 - 2:00	Dedicated Time for Exhibits Session
2:00 - 3:00	3 rd Concurrent Session
3:00 - 3:10	Break / Refreshments / Exhibits Open
3:10 - 3:30	“Focus” On Talent!!! M.A.I. Band / Raffle

Four Points by Sheraton Norwood
1125 Boston-Providence Turnpike
Route 1 (18 miles south of Boston)
Norwood, MA 02062
Phone: 781-769-7900
www.fourpointsnorwood.com
Please see page 15 for directions.

We look forward to seeing you on October 1, 2024!

“Focus” on Vision Impairment & Blindness



8:00 - 8:25 Registration / Exhibits Open / Refreshments

8:30 - 8:45 Welcome Remarks

8:45 - 9:45 Keynote: Nicole Ross, OD, MSc., FAAO, Dip. AAO (LV)

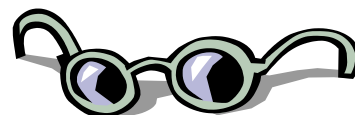
“Individualized Approaches in Examination of Functional Vision and Vision Rehabilitation”

Participants will explore innovative strategies for adapting vision function assessments and enhancing clinical and functional vision evaluations to meet the unique needs of each patient, with a particular focus on pediatric population with application for adult populations with intellectual and developmental disabilities in three important ways:

- Beginning with an examination of the importance of individualizing vision examinations and drawing from experiences at NECO Center for Eyecare at Perkins School for the Blind Low Vision Clinic, attendees will learn how adaptative techniques and keen observations during exams can lead to more effective and empathetic assessments. Real-world examples will demonstrate how these personalized approaches can significantly impact diagnostic accuracy and patient comfort.
- Exploring recent advancements in the development of visual function tests that cater to a wide array of abilities, including methods specifically designed for non-verbal patients, including how these innovative tools are advancing clinical practice and research will be highlighted.
- Lastly, a focus on the integration of Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) into both everyday clinical settings and broader research initiatives will be offered. Discussion will center on how PROMs have become essential tools for understanding patient perspectives, including use in low vision and cerebral visual impairment, measuring treatment outcomes, and refining patient care strategies. Current research utilizing PROMs to tailor interventions to specific patient groups will be reviewed, emphasizing the potential for these measures to guide future therapeutic developments.

Healthcare professionals, rehabilitation professionals and caregivers will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to implement more personalized and effective approaches in the assessment and rehabilitation of vision, fostering a deeper understanding of patient needs and enhancing the quality of care.

9:45 - 10:00 Break / Exhibits Open



1A. Individualized Approaches in Examination of Functional Vision and Vision Rehabilitation: Question and Answer Session

Presenter: Nicole C. Ross, OD, MSc, FAAO, Dip. AAO (LV)
Associate Professor of Optometry
New England College of Optometry

Description: Participants will explore innovative strategies for adapting vision function assessments and enhancing clinical and functional vision evaluations to meet the unique needs of each patient, with a particular focus on pediatric populations with application for adult populations with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Focused on three key objectives: clinical care, clinical research and clinical patient reported outcome measures, this session will provide time for Q & A.

1B. Incorporating Haptic into Daily Interactions with DeafBlind Individuals

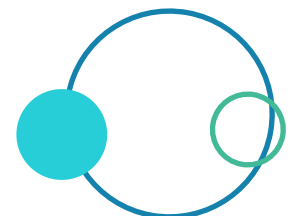
Presenter: Christine Telford, COMS
New England Regional Service Coordinator
Helen Keller National Center

Description: This session will provide an overview of haptics and the importance of touch when working with individuals who are DeafBlind. Participants will learn techniques and strategies to foster inclusion and increase access for DeafBlind individuals in home, educational settings and the community utilizing Haptics.

1C. Inclusive Postsecondary Education: Trends and Opportunities in Massachusetts for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Presenter: Ashley Luce, Program Manager
Institute for Community Inclusion
University of Massachusetts, Boston

Description: Massachusetts has once again taken the lead in creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities to include college in their transition services or their adult plans. In this session, the presenter will provide a brief overview of legislation that has guided colleges, schools and now, adult service providers to offer college experiences to students with intellectual or developmental disabilities or autism. This includes students who also have sensory disabilities. The session will also include examples of what inclusive college experiences look like and how students are supported with accommodations, coaching, and peer mentoring.



1D. Dog and Human Guides

Presenters: Karin Barrows, M.Ed., COMS
Mass Commission for the Blind, Region 5
Kara Peters, M.Ed., COMS
Mass Commission for the Blind, Region 4

Description: The Human Guide portion of the presentation will address proper human guide technique for individuals with blindness and low vision. Suggestions for Human Guide modifications and adaptations for individuals with additional impairments. The Dog Guide portion of this presentation will discuss the criteria for being considered a candidate for a Dog Guide as well as comparing and contrasting the experience of cane travel versus Dog Guide travel. Dog Guide etiquette for the general public will be addressed along with public law regarding the rights and responsibilities of Dog Guide users.

1E. New Products and Services

Different companies/agencies will discuss the services and products they provide that are helpful to individuals with visual impairment or blindness and those who support them, including:

- Hope Clinical Care
- The CVI Center at Perkins
- The Carroll Center
- Careforth

PLEASE NOTE: CEU's are not offered for this session.

11:00 - 11:15 Break / Exhibits Open



11:15 - 12:15 Concurrent Sessions

2A. Beyond 20/20: Understanding the Nuances of Vision for Daily Living

Presenter: Alexis G. Malkin, OD, FAAO,
Associate Professor of Optometry
New England College of Optometry

Description: This session will discuss the major causes of vision impairment in individuals with disabilities. It will provide a brief overview of the components of a routine eye exam as well as a more in-depth discussion of the components of an assessment of functional vision. We will explore a “day in the life” of someone with vision impairment to help demonstrate the many areas where vision impairment can impact a person.

2B. Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI) & Environmental Considerations

Presenter: Marguerite Tibaudo
Education Director of the Deafblind Program
Perkins School for the Blind

Description: CVI results in a series of visual behaviors consistent with ventral and dorsal stream dysfunction, causing difficulty with visual attention and visual recognition. Related challenges around visuospatial processing, visual field deficits, and impaired motion perception can alter visual perception. The presenter will review these implications and share considerations for the learning environment.

2C. All About Switches

Presenter: Wendy L. Buckley, M.Ed., Ed.S.
Assistive Technology Specialist
Deafblind School, Perkins School for the Blind

Description: This presentation will explore how simple switches can be used for cause and effect, choice-making, and leisure activities. We will discuss features of simple switches, look at options for connecting a switch to a computer or iPad, and explore free online activities for switch users.

2D. Love is in the Air: When Friendships Deepen, Please Support Our Relationships!

Presenters: Maureen O'Rourke King, Trainer
Department of Developmental Services, SE Region
Panel: Celia Walsh and JR Foley & John Shimkus and
Cheryl Marshall

Description: This session will provide an overview of the importance of relationships and the fact that sometimes relationships deepen. This panel presentation will provide insight from individuals supported on how to best help them develop and maintain relationships that have turned to more than friendship.

2E. March Music Madness! Same Song, Different Artists! Song of the Month! Incorporating Choice Making and Orientation and Mobility into Music Therapy

Presenters: Mollie Caravello, MT-BC, Board Certified Music Therapist
South Shore Educational Collaborative

Laisee Schipper, COMS, PTA
South Shore Educational Collaborative

Description: During music therapy sessions, different styles and genres of music are incorporated and the students are encouraged to express their opinions by voting via a mode that best suits their abilities. Using an expanded core curriculum and co-treating with O&M and speech therapists, individuals are exposed to a variety of music. Song of the Month, Same Song, Different Artists, and March Music Madness are a few of the ways that this is integrated. The specialists have worked together through the years to create unique and clever ways to meet the needs of a variety of clientele so that they have access to voting in a way that best suits their needs. Clients are exposed to positional concepts such as top/bottom, left/right for further exposure to these concepts. Examples and sensory experiences will be provided.

12:15 - 12:30 Exhibits Open



12:30 - 1:30 Lunch & Award Presentations:

- Remarks: MCB Commissioner John Oliveira
- Mark Holt "Gift of Lunch"
- Paul McDade "Focus" Award for Distinguished Service
- Paul McDade "Focus" Award for Distinguished Leadership

1:30 - 2:00 Dedicated Vendor & Poster Session!!!

We listened to you!!!
We have scheduled more time after lunch for meeting
our Exhibitors, viewing the Posters, and networking.
Enjoy!!!

3A. When and When Not to Worry about Eye Pain

Presenter: KC LaMattina, MD
Assistant Professor, Boston University School of Medicine
Director of Pediatrics Service, Director of Uveitis Service
Department of Ophthalmology, Boston Medical Center

Description: Eye pain can be the result of benign conditions like dry eye syndrome, or vision-threatening problems such as optic neuritis or uveitis. Assessing eye pain, particularly in patients with developmental challenges, can be difficult even with all the proper tools at your disposal. This session will give attendees the tools to assess signs or complaints of eye pain and determine the urgency of evaluation by an eye care specialist.

3B. Successful Transition for Deafblind Students: Essential Components for Families, Teams and Agencies

Presenters: Tracy Evans Luiselli, Ed.D.
New England Consortium on Deafblindness (NEC)
Brenda Allair, M.Ed.
New England Consortium on Deafblindness (NEC)

Description: Transition is a critical and challenging time for all students with visual impairments and can be especially complex for deafblind students, who often have support needs that may necessitate the involvement of many agencies and professionals. NEC will share their Transition Checklist of Essential Components developed to serve as a guide for students, families, and collaborative teams to support a successful transition process for deafblind students, with a focus on shared conversations and person-centered planning.

3C. You Don't Have to Have Vision to Have a Vision! Creating a Meaningful Vision while Incorporating Charting the Life Course Tools

Presenters: Maureen O'Rourke King, Trainer
Department of Developmental Services, SE Region
Nancy Sharon, TVI, COMS
Director of Education and Community Services
Carroll Center for the Blind

Description: This session will identify the importance of having a meaningful VISION in achieving your life goals! We will explore the Charting the LifeCourse Framework to enhance vision planning and provide resources in documenting this process. We will incorporate strategies to best support someone with vision loss/blindness in being fully empowered to create a vision to reflect their hopes, dreams, goals to achieve their best life!

3D. Creative Arts for All Abilities and Interests

Presenters: Malissa Kenney
Director of Outreach, Inclusion and CapeCodCAN
Donna Rockwell, Art Director
Cotuit Center for the Arts

Description: Join us for a discussion of creative artmaking, techniques, materials and adaptive supplies for all abilities and interests. Presenters will briefly introduce inclusive art programs presented by the Cotuit Center for the Arts Outreach team for youth and adults with developmental, intellectual and physical disabilities, neurodiversity and social/emotional health diagnoses. The presentation will be followed with an opportunity to create a collage using textured papers, shapes, natural materials and our senses of touch and smell. Examples of art created by artists with disabilities will be shared through the PowerPoint presentation.

3E. New Products and Services

Different companies/agencies will discuss the services and products they provide that are helpful to individuals with visual impairment or blindness and those who support them.

- Federation for Children with Special Needs
- Perkins Library
- DCR's Universal Access Program
- Disabled Persons Protection Commission

PLEASE NOTE: CEU's are not offered for this session.

3:00 - 3:10 Break / Refreshments / Exhibits Open



3:10 - 3:25 "Focus" On Talent!!!

A special musical performance by the M.A.I. Band will put the finishing touch on the day!

3:25 - 3:30 Closing Remarks
RAFFLE Wonderful PRIZES!!!
Must be present to WIN!

Registration Information



1. **Due Date:** Please register BY September 16, 2024.
2. **Paying by Credit Card?** Please Register Online: See link in box at top of page 14.
3. **Paying by Check or Purchase Order?** Please complete the Registration Form on page 14 of this Brochure and return with payment to:
Rebecca McLean / Shriver Clinical Services / May Center Medical Office
Wrentham Developmental Center / PO Box 144, Wrentham, MA 02093
 - **Please make check payable to: Shriver Clinical Services Corporation**
4. **Questions** re: Registration? Rebecca.C.McLean@mass.gov or 508-384-5558.
5. **Refunds:** We regret that refunds cannot be given after September 10, 2024, unless by notification from us to you that your check (# and amount) will be returned to you. This refund protocol will also be used if conference capacity is reached at the time we receive your registration and payment.
6. **Continuing Education Information:**
Application for 4 hours of Continuing Education will be submitted to:
 - **ACVREP:** Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals - Questions: Samantha.Linden@mass.gov
 - **CRC:** Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification
 - **CEC:** An application has been made for 4 CECs for Social Workers.
 - **MA Board of Registration in Nursing:** 4 contact hours will be granted. Questions: Dianne.Rodrigues@mass.gov
 - **MA CE:** NECO has applied for 4 hours of MA CE approved credits. Questions: Addy Rose, O.D.: RoseA@neco.edu
 - **PDP:** Perkins Training Center will award 5 Professional Development Points. Questions: Mary.Zatta@perkins.edu
 - **OT CEU:** Perkins Training Center will award .4 CEUs. Questions: Mary.Zatta@perkins.edu

Please indicate your choice of CEUs on the registration form.
7. **Scholarships** are available for individuals with intellectual disability and their families (priority given for the Southeast Region).
Information: Dianne.Rodrigues@mass.gov
8. **Reduced Room Rates** of \$155 per night, exclusive of taxes, will be available at the Four Points by Sheraton, Norwood, phone: 781-769-7900.
 - Please mention Shriver Clinical.
 - Rooms at this rate are held until September 3, 2024, and subject to availability.
9. This Registration Brochure and Form can be downloaded from the "Training" section of: focusonvisionandvisionloss.org
10. **General Questions:** Please contact Lisa.DiBonaventura@mass.gov

NEW - Paying by Credit Card? Please register online: <https://tinyurl.com/yvxzxv48>

Paying by Check or Purchase Order? Please use this form. Thank you!

Please Register Early if you can! Registrations Due by September 16, 2024

"Focus" On Vision Impairment & Blindness Conference

October 1, 2024 - Four Points by Sheraton, Norwood, Massachusetts

Name: _____

Agency Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Can we share your contact information with sponsors? Yes No

Lunch Choice: If no choice is indicated, the Vegan lunch will be ordered.

- ____ **Grilled Marinated Chicken Breast** with whipped potatoes, baby carrots, port-wine sauce
- ____ **Spaghetti Squash** with cherry tomatoes, roasted broccoli, crispy chickpeas, tofu crouton (**Vegan & Gluten Free**).

Special Accommodations Needed*: _____

* For Interpreting Services, please let us know by September 2, 2024.

Concurrent Session Selection: Select the letter of the 3 sessions you plan to attend.

10:00 - 11:00					11:15 - 12:15					2:00 - 3:00				
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E

Please select the type(s) of Continuing Education (CE) you will be requesting:

ACVREP CRC CEC OT CE Nursing CEU MA CE PDP

Conference Rate with Lunch:

General Admittance postmarked by 7/31/24:	General Admittance postmarked after 7/31/24:
\$55.00	\$65.00

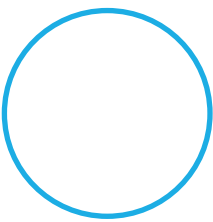
Check enclosed: yes no/reason why _____ Amount: _____

Please make check payable to: **Shriver Clinical Services Corporation.**

Mail along with this form to: Rebecca McLean, Shriver Clinical Services May Center Medical Office, Wrentham Developmental Center / PO Box 144 / Wrentham, MA 02093

Thank you for your support!

Directions



Four Points by Sheraton Norwood
1125 Boston-Providence Turnpike
Route 1 (18 miles south of Boston)
Norwood, MA 02062
Phone: 781-769-7900
www.fourpointsnorwood.com

From Boston and points North

Take I-93 South which turns into I-95 (Route 128) North.

Take Exit 15B, Route 1 South toward Norwood.

Travel 4.5 miles, the Four Points by Sheraton Norwood Hotel & Conference Center will be on your right after the Staples Plaza.

From the West

Follow Mass. Turnpike (I-90) East

Take Exit 14 onto I-95 (Route 128) South. (Note: From the West, this Exit is number 14, from the East, it is number 15.)

Continue South to Exit 15B. Route 1, Norwood,
And proceed as above.

From Providence, TF Green Airport & points South

Take I-95 North to Exit 11B, Neponset Street, Norwood.

Drive 7/10 of a mile and turn left onto Dean Street.

At traffic light, turn left onto Route 1, heading South.

The Four Points by Sheraton Norwood Hotel & Conference Center is on your right after the Staples Plaza.

From Logan Airport

Exit airport, follow signs through Ted Williams Tunnel (toll) to I-90 /I-93 South.

Follow signs for I-93 South about 7 miles.

I-93 South turns into I-95 (Route 128) North.

Proceed on I-95(Route 128) North to Exit 15B, Route 1 Norwood.

Travel Route 1 South 4.5 miles to the Four Points by Sheraton Norwood Hotel & Conference Center, located on your right after the Staples Plaza.

Lisa DiBonaventura, MA, COMS
Statewide Director for Vision & Vision Loss Services, DDS
WDC, 131 Emerald Street, PO Box 144
Wrentham, MA 02093