



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wahiawa Surgeon Trains Eye Doctors In Myanmar and Viet Nam

(Honolulu, Hawaii), August 20, 2014 – Christopher Tortora, M.D., a Wahiawa ophthalmologist with Hawaiian Eye Center, joined a team of nine volunteer faculty in Yangon, Myanmar this past April for the country's first western eye surgical training program in decades, following its recent opening to democracy.

The four-day Myanmar Eye Meeting, conducted by Hawaiian Eye Foundation in partnership with Yangon Eye Hospital, was attended by about 50 Burmese ophthalmology students and practicing ophthalmologists. A wide range of topics, including cataracts, glaucoma, and corneal and retina disorders were covered in lectures, patient consultations, and diagnostic equipment demonstrations.

Myanmar has only about 300 ophthalmologists for a population of 60 million people, a ratio of one to 200,000 people, one-quarter of the World Health Organization's target, so there is an urgent need for ophthalmic training. Hawaiian Eye Foundation was invited to return for another Myanmar Eye Meeting in 2015, and plans to conduct future meetings in alternating years with its ongoing Imperial City Eye Meetings in Viet Nam.

Immediately following the Myanmar Eye Meeting, Dr. Tortora and fellow faculty members traveled from Yangon to Hue, Viet Nam, to participate in the Foundation's fifth biennial Imperial City Eye Meeting.

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The Imperial City Eye Meeting is conducted in partnership with Hue Central Hospital, and is attended by hundreds of eye doctors from throughout Viet Nam. In addition to lectures, consultations, and diagnostic equipment demonstrations, the four-day training includes individualized instruction in cataract surgery, using operating microscopes to perform surgery on pigs' eyes.

Dr. Tortora and fellow faculty members traveled to Myanmar and Viet Nam at their own expense to donate their time. "It was so rewarding to teach doctors who are so eager to learn," said Dr. Tortora, "and we hope our program makes a difference for the people of Southeast Asia."

The non-profit Hawaiian Eye Foundation, based in Honolulu, has sponsored ophthalmic training programs in Southeast Asia since 2006, and for 30 years has conducted humanitarian eye surgery expeditions to Pacific island nations, including Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Palau, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, and Kiribati.

Dr. Christopher Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of "The Hawaiian Eye Show," a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision broadcast live every Saturday at 8 a.m. on KHVH 830 AM/rebroadcast at 9 p.m. on KHBZ 990 AM. He and his colleagues at the Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 or visit www.HawaiianEye.com and www.Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter, where "life has never looked better."

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