



**16<sup>th</sup> 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:

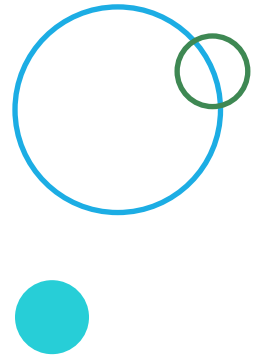
Department of Developmental Services  
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

### Sponsors:

Perkins School for the Blind  
DDS Southeast Region Training Council

### Friends:

New England College of Optometry  
Shriver Clinical Services



## To Our Exhibitors Including:

Hope

The Carroll Center for the Blind

New England Low Vision and Blindness

Perkins School for the Blind: The CVI Center at

Perkins

Visiting Rehab and Nursing Services

Therapro, Inc

and More...

# Poster Displays



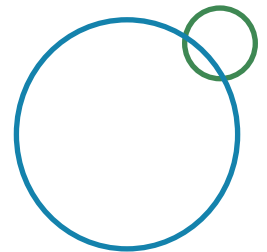
**As I See It: The Deaf-Blind Immersion Experience at Home**  
Carmen Wise, Justice Resource Institute

**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:

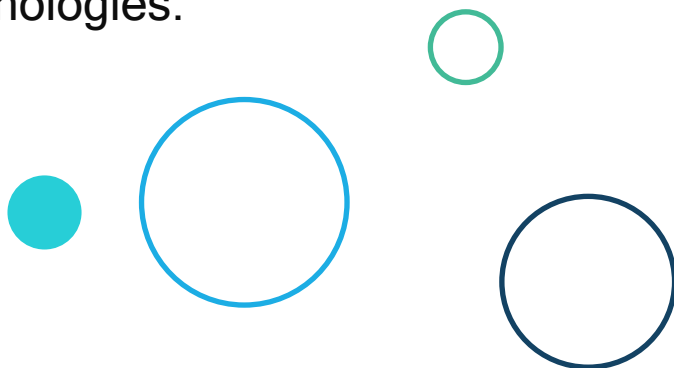
Nicole Ross, OD, MSc, FAAO, Dip. AAO (LV)

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.

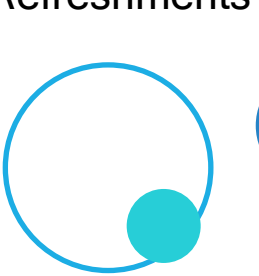


Dr. Ross sees patients at the NECO Center for Eye Care, the Perkins School for the Blind, and the Carroll Center for the Blind. Her academic roles include teaching Low Vision Rehabilitation and Advanced Ocular Disease classes. She is also a PhD candidate at Northeastern University, focusing on Psychology.

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”

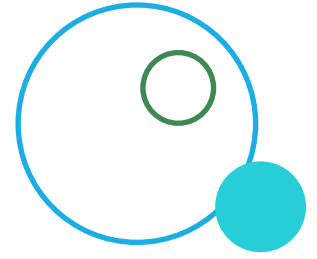


8:00 - 8:25	Registration / Vendors Open / Refreshments
8:30 - 8:45	Welcome Remarks
8:45 - 9:45	Keynote
9:45 - 10:00	Break / Exhibits Open
10:00 - 11:00	1 <sup>st</sup> Concurrent Session
11:00 - 11:15	Break / Exhibits Open
11:15 - 12:15	2 <sup>nd</sup> Concurrent Session
12:15 - 12:30	Exhibits Open
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch, Remarks, & Award Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mark Holt Gift of Lunch</li><li>• Paul McDade “Focus” Awards for Distinguished Service and Leadership</li></ul>
1:30 - 2:00	Dedicated Time for Exhibits Session
2:00 - 3:00	3 <sup>rd</sup> 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](http://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 adaptive 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.

## 10:00 - 11:00 Concurrent Sessions (continued)

### 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
- The CVI Center at Perkins
- The Carroll Center

**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.

**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](https://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:
<b>\$55.00</b>	<b>\$65.00</b>

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](http://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