



**“Focus” on Vision Impairment & Blindness Conference
14th Annual**

Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Intellectual Disability & Vision Loss

March 13, 2019

8:00 am - 3:30 pm

Four Points by Sheraton, Norwood, MA

Welcome Remarks: David D’Arcangelo

Commissioner

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Keynote Speaker: Lotfi B. Merabet, OD, Ph.D., MPH

Associate Professor of Ophthalmology

Harvard Medical School

Director, the Laboratory for Visual Neuroplasticity

Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary

“Assessing Functional Vision Using Virtual Reality in Brain compared to Ocular Based Visual Impairment”

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

A Very Special Thank You...

Lead Sponsor:

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:

The Carroll Center for the Blind

Crystal Springs School

Disabled Persons Protection Commission

HumanWare

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Perkins eLearning

Perkins Library

Prevent Blindness Children's Vision Massachusetts

Literature Table:

Eye Care America

Hadley School for the Blind

Independent Living Aids

Maxi Aids

National Eye Institute

National Institute on Aging

and more...



Poster Displays:

Environmental Recommendations for Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

Bianca Fillion, M.Ed., COMS

Widening the Circle/PATHWAYS to Friendship: Friendships Between People With and Without Disabilities

Jim Ross

The Arc of Massachusetts

Meet in the Music: Using Music to Create Connections

Lisa A. El-Lakis, MT-BC

Board Certified Music Therapist

DDS/Hogan Regional Center

Accessing Outdoor Recreation

Laila Soleimani

Outreach Specialist

DCR's Universal Access Program

Techniques for Modified Human Guide

Lynn Watras, PT

EDCO

MAB's Monthly Support Group - Growing by Leaps and Bounds

Orientation and Mobility

Massachusetts Association for the Blind

My Road to Success

Tabitha Mahan

HMEA

What in the World is O&M?

M. Bernadette Dawson, COMS

Emily Rose Taul, Student & Author

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities @ Rhode Island College

Using Your Self Defense for the Visually Impaired

Yashira Correa

People, Incorporated

Introducing our Keynote:

Lotfi B. Merabet, OD, PhD, MPH

Lotfi B. Merabet, OD, PhD, MPH is a clinician-neuroscientist investigating how the brain adapts to the loss of sight. He completed his doctorate degree in neuroscience (University of Montréal) and clinical doctorate in optometry (New England College of Optometry). He then continued his post-doctoral training at Harvard Medical School, Boston University, and the MGH Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging and completed his Master's degree in Public Health (Harvard). In 2010, he joined the faculty of the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary as a clinical-researcher. His work is currently supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Merabet currently serves as member of the Board of Directors and Trustees for the Carroll Center for the Blind and the National Braille Press.



Conference Agenda “At-a-Glance”

8:00 – 8:25	Registration / Vendors Open / Refreshments
8:25 – 8:30	Opening Remarks
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 & Award Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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 – 3:15	Break / Refreshments / Exhibits Open
3:15 – 3:45	“Focus” On Talent!!! (Performance) / 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 17 for a full listing of directions.

We look forward to seeing you on March 13th!!!

“Focus” on Vision Impairment & Blindness

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

8:30 – 8:45 Welcome Remarks:

David D’Arcangelo

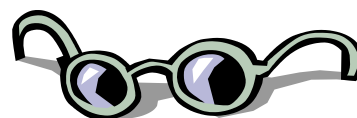
Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

8:45 – 9:45 Keynote: Lotfi B. Merabet, O.D., Ph.D., MPH

“Assessing Functional Vision Using Virtual Reality in Brain compared to Ocular Based Visual Impairment.”

Proper assessment of visual abilities is important to an individual’s wellbeing, but can prove challenging in pediatric populations with visual impairments and depending on the type of visual impairment (i.e. ocular versus brain based visual impairment). When assessed in a traditional clinical environment, individuals with cortical/cerebral visual impairment (CVI) may show performance levels at or near normal levels, yet they also exhibit perceptual difficulties when faced with highly dynamic and visually complex real-world scenarios. This mismatch suggests that traditional clinical measures of visual abilities may not capture the broad range of perceptual impairments seen in this population. Recent technological advancements such as virtual reality (VR) allow for new opportunities to improve upon traditional vision assessments, by providing novel objective and ecologically valid measurements of performance, and the investigation of their neural basis. The present work highlights results from testing using two virtual reality based environment simulations (specifically, searching for a target toy or individual in a crowd) combined with eye tracking technology developed to assess visual search performance in both ocular and brain based visual impairment. Using eye tracking related metrics, our findings to date suggest that CVI participants showed a characteristic profile of increased sensitivity to higher demands of visual complexity. This same profile was not observed in individuals with ocular based visual impairment which may be related to differences in the neural processing mechanisms between both types of visual impairment.

9:45 – 10:00 Break / Exhibits Open



10:00 – 11:00 Concurrent Sessions

A. Cortical Visual Impairment: The Role of the Ophthalmologist

Presenter: Gena Heidary, MD, PhD

Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, Harvard Medical School
Director, Pediatric Neuro-Ophthalmology Service, Children's Hospital

Description: The purpose of this talk is to describe and clarify the role of the ophthalmologist in the multidisciplinary approach to a child with cortical visual impairment. The talk will review strategies for assessing visual function in children and milestones in visual development to provide a framework for discussion of CVI.

B. Fixed Route and Complementary Paratransit Transportation. What you should know and how it can assist your customer

Presenter: Anna Koterski

Director, Paratransit Brokerage Services and Customer Service

Description: The presentation will focus on review of Federal Transit Administration Circular FTA C 4710.1 with emphasis on fixed route and ADA complementary paratransit services. Information regarding accessibility, transit provider expectation and rider rights and responsibilities will be reviewed.

C. Partnering with Families: Discovering Abilities Through School and Transition Community Engagement Experiences

Presenters:

Christa Gicklhorn, M.Ed., Vocational Lead Teacher, Deafblind Program

Wendy Bridgeo, M.Ed., Vocational Teacher, Deafblind Program

Emily Taborada-Monroe, Lead Job Coach, Deafblind Program

Adam Pulzetti, Lead Job Coach, Deafblind Program

Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, MA

Description: It's never too early to start preparing your child for life after school. A major component of discovering student's abilities and interests is collaboration with families, community members and adult providers. Successful transition outcomes take planning. This training teaches self-advocates, families and support professionals about the 3 components of a successful transition program including knowledge, practice and support. Presenters share lessons learned from many years of transition success and challenges as partners with families to create the life they want for their young adults approaching transition.

10:00 – 11:00 Concurrent Sessions (continued)

D. New Products and Services

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

- Disabled Persons Protection Commission
- Perkins eLearning
- Prevent Blindness America Children's Vision Massachusetts
- The Carroll Center

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

E. Managing Light to Enhance Visual Functioning

Presenter: Bob McGillivray, Director of Low Vision Services
The Carroll Center for the Blind

Description: The importance of lighting is well known but managing lighting can be tricky. This presentation will review the impact of lighting on visual functioning and discuss effective ways to control lighting in a wide variety of situations. We will review the characteristics of natural and artificial light, the impact and management of glare, the ever-changing lighting options and present approaches in assessing the lighting needs of individuals with visual impairments.

11:00 – 11:15 Break / Exhibits Open

11:15 – 12:15 Concurrent Sessions

A. Optometric Vision Therapy – What it is? How it Works? Who Would Benefit?

Presenter: Theresa J. Ruggiero, O.D., FCOVD
Northampton Vision Specialists

Description: The prevalence of functional vision disorders is significantly higher for individuals with intellectual disabilities when compared to the general population. Optometric Vision Therapy is a non-invasive treatment option that can remediate many functional vision disorders. This talk will explain the basic principles of optometric vision therapy including different modes of delivery. We will also discuss the most common visual dysfunctions and how to recognize them in your clients, as well as provide information and resources to locate the appropriate clinician for examination and treatment.

11:15 – 12:15 Concurrent Sessions (continued)

B. Recreation Options for Individuals with Vision Loss and Intellectual Disabilities

Presenters: Meg Robertson, Director Orientation and Mobility Department
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
Stephen Jordan, Director of Orientation and Mobility Services
Massachusetts Association for the Blind
Jill Readell Recreation Therapist I
Wrentham Developmental Center
Helen Long, Owner/ Personal Trainer
Fitness to Go

Description: Join us to learn from our dynamic panel about the importance of recreation activities for individuals with vision loss. Resources for Day Programs and Group Homes regarding access to recreation opportunities will be shared.

C. Mindfulness and Recuperation

Presenter: Meg Chang, EdD, BC-DMT, LCAT, Education Specialist
The Center for Mindfulness,
University of Massachusetts Medical School

Description: For those who are interested in taking time to pause, connect, and revitalize themselves, this experiential workshop introduces mindfulness practices for wellness and self-care that can benefit both caregivers and individuals living with intellectual disabilities. We will explore how mindfulness can foster resilience for caregivers and how breathing exercises can benefit the individual with disabilities. The workshop will incorporate strategies such as learning a mindful pause, the STOP practice, and relaxation breathing.



11:15 – 12:15 Concurrent Sessions (continued)

D. Intro to Assistive Technology Assessments and Recommendations

Presenters:

Kate Katulak, M.Ed., TVI, Assistant Director of College Success
Perkins School for the Blind

HuyenTran Vo, M.Ed., Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments,
Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Certified Vision Rehabilitation
Therapist, Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist,
Perkins School for the Blind College Success Program

Description: This session is an introduction to how Assistive Technology Assessments for people who are Blind/Visually Impaired are conducted. There will be an overview of current technology available including high tech, low tech, and cost effective tools. There will also be discussion of the decision making process of finding the right tool(s) to meet the needs of students/clients.

E. ~~CANCELED Introduction to Care and Intervention for Individuals with New Onset Low Vision or Blindness in an Inpatient Rehabilitation Setting~~

~~Presenters: Melissa Gregory MOT, OTR/L — Leanna Katz MS, OTD, OTR/L
— Talia Mouldovan OTR/L, ATP — Lauren Sheehan MOT, OTR/L
— Brynn Speroni MOT, OTR/L
— Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital~~

~~Description: This presentation aims to feature various approaches to vision rehabilitation and care intervention for individuals with cognitive, physical, and/or sensory impairments with new onset low vision or blindness. Goals include highlighting the evolving needs of individuals with new onset low vision or blindness who also have cognitive, physical, and/or sensory impairments while demonstrating supportive practice that is client-centered, evidence-based and theory-driven.~~

12:15 – 12:30 Exhibits Open

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

- 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 again scheduled more time after lunch for meeting
our Exhibitors, viewing the Posters, and networking.
Enjoy!!!**



2:00 – 3:00 Concurrent Sessions

A. To Wear or Not to Wear – Impact of Spectacle Use in Individuals with Disabilities

Presenter: Nicole C. Ross, O.D., MSc., FAAO,
Associate Professor and Attending Optometrist,
New England College of Optometry
Attending Optometrist, Perkins School for the Blind
Attending Optometrist, Carroll Center for the Blind

Description: This lecture will review behaviors that indicate change in visual function and present case based examples of when spectacle wear was indicated and when it was not. We will also discuss issues with glasses adaptation, difficulties with prescription changes, and difficulties with frame adjustments. Attendees will review cases and behavioral indicators that will assist in identifying cases of visual impairment. Etiology and epidemiology of vision impairment in those with multiple disabilities will also be reviewed.

B. Fitness Training for Individuals with Special Needs

Presenter: Bret Bondlow
Owner/Trainer
Compelling Fitness

Description: Come attend this unique lecture and demonstration on the benefits of fitness training for individuals with special needs and physical disabilities. Listen, learn and actively participate in this interactive presentation.

2:00 – 3:00 Concurrent Sessions (continued)

C. Come & Learn how “FLIRT”ing and “KISS”ing Fit into Rehabilitation Teaching

Presenters: Carolyn M. Ovesen, M.Ed., COMS, COTA/L
Rehabilitation Teaching Supervisor
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Description: How do “FLIRT”ing and “KISS”ing fit into Rehabilitation Teaching? What?? Yes, it’s true! During this session you will learn how to Find Little Independent Rehabilitation Techniques (FLIRT) as well as how to Keep It Safe and Simple (KISS). You will learn briefly about the most common eye diseases, be exposed to rehabilitation teaching strategies and techniques, as well as see and learn about adaptive equipment and in the end, how to FLIRT and KISS like a Rehabilitation Teacher!

D. New Products and Services

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

- Perkins Library
- Humanware

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



Registration Information



1. Please fill out the attached form and return BY February 22, 2019 to:
Lisa DiBonaventura / Vision & Vision Loss Services, DDS
Wrentham Developmental Center, PO Box 144
Wrentham, MA 02093
2. For questions regarding Registration, please contact Lisa:
Lisa.DiBonaventura@state.ma.us or phone 508-384-5539.
3. Please make check payable to: **Shriver Clinical Services Corporation**
4. Refunds: We regret that refunds cannot be given after February 15th 2019, 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.
5. Continuing Education Information:
Application for 4 hours of Continuing Education has been submitted to:
Academy for Certification of Vision Rehab. & Education Prof. (**ACVREP**)
Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (**CRC**)
An application has been made for 4 **CECs** for Social Workers.
MA Board of Registration in Nursing: 4 contact hours will be granted.
Questions: EKing@massmail.state.ma.us
NECO/NEEI has applied for 4 hours of **MA CE** approved credits.
Questions: Barry S. Kran, O.D.: Kranb@neco.edu
Perkins Training Center will award 5 Professional Development Points (**PDPs**)
Questions: Teresa.Pagliuca@Perkins.org
Please indicate your choice of CEUs on the registration form.
6. Scholarships are available for individuals with intellectual disability and their families (priority given for the Southeast Region).
Information: Dianne.Rodrigues@massmail.state.ma.us
7. Reduced room rates of \$115.00 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 February 12, 2019 and subject to availability.
8. This Registration Brochure and Form can be downloaded from the "Training" section of DDS Vision Loss website: www.mass.gov/dds/visionloss and from the "Perkins Training Center Schedule" on the Perkins website: www.perkinselearning.org/events-monthly
9. Questions please contact: Lisa.DiBonaventura@state.ma.us or 508-384-5539.

Please Register Early!!!

Registration Form

Please return this form by February 22, 2019
Register early if you can

"Focus" On Vision Impairment & Blindness

Wednesday March 13, 2019 - 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.

- ___ **Chicken Milanese:** encrusted with herbs, parmesan bread crumbs, & lemon volute, served with mashed potatoes, baby carrots & asparagus.

OR

- ___ **Stuffed Red Pepper:** with quinoa, roasted butternut squash and cranberries over roasted spinach and carrots (**Vegan & Gluten Free**).

Special Accommodations Needed*: _____

*** For Interpreting Services, please let us know by February 10, 2019**

Concurrent Session Selection: Circle the letter of the 3 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	A B C D E

Please circle the type(s) of CE you will be requesting:

ACVREP CRC CEC Nursing CEU MA CE PDP

Conference Rate with Lunch:

General Admittance postmarked by 1/31/19:	General Admittance postmarked after 1/31/19	Physician (MD, DO, OD)
\$55.00	\$65.00	\$110.00

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

Please make check payable to: **Shriver Clinical Services Corporation** and mail along with this form to: Lisa DiBonaventura/ Vision & Vision Loss Services/ Wrentham Developmental Center, PO Box 144, Wrentham, MA 02093

Thank you for your support!

We would love to hear from you!

We consider all feedback when planning the "Focus" Conference each year. Please share your ideas and suggestions here and send with your Registration. We appreciate your input and support.

Additional Copies of this Registration Brochure can be found:

- "Training Resources and Events" section of the "Focus" website:
www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org



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 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.

“Let’s Walk Together: Safe Guiding Techniques for Individuals with Intellectual Disability and Vision Loss”

Video – Free Copies Available!!!

This 23-minute video describes the human guide technique (also known as sighted guide). Throughout the video you will see people using the technique or variations of the technique, in everyday situations including:

- Doorways, Narrow Spaces, and Crowded Areas
- Stairs, Steps and Ramps
- Uneven Surfaces
- Seating at a Table and a Couch
- Getting Into and Out of a Car and Van

Video and Printable Resources AVAILABLE ONLINE!

Video and Printable Resources:

<http://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/lets-walk-together.html>

Free Copies: To request a free DVD of the complete “Let’s Walk Together” video please email Lisa.DiBonaventura@state.ma.us .

Please share these resources!

This video was made possible through the support of the **Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS)** and the **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)** in collaboration with: **Emerson College, Shriver Clinical Services, and The Carroll Center for the Blind**

Be sure to check out the "Focus" website: www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org

The "Focus" website is a resource of the MCB/DDS Partnership Project created to raising awareness of services and information for individuals with intellectual disability and vision impairment, legal blindness or deaf/blindness.

MCB/DDS Services & Resources

Learn about Certified Orientation & Mobility Services, the American Printing House for the Blind Federal Quota Account, and other initiatives focused on the needs of individuals with intellectual disability and vision loss.

Eye Care, Safety & Finding an Eye Care Provider

Find an eye care provider near you; review the DDS Vision Care Guidelines; discover tips for keeping eyes safe and reducing glare, learn how to best prepare for eye exams and eye surgery; see how vision can be affected by specific eye disorders; focus on nutrition for eye health, vision and aging eyes, and more!

Everyday Life

Discover useful strategies, including orientation & mobility techniques; communication and recreation resources; browse catalogs specific to items for individuals with vision loss; and more!

Students

Explore specialized resources available to students with vision loss and their families to promote education, healthy vision, and a smooth transition to adult life.

Connect

Read inspiring stories of individuals with vision loss; check out the Focus Blog, discover answers to frequently asked questions, and connect with us!

Training & Events

Learn about conferences and workshops related to vision care and vision loss; access downloadable resource handouts and the Let's Walk Together Human Guide video; sign up to receive email notification of upcoming events!

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