

**BOTSWANA OPTOMETRISTS ASSOCIATION
GENETIC COURSE FOR OPTOMS VALEDICTORY
CEREMONY (ONLINE)-20 JULY 2022 at 6 PM
(18.00Hrs)**

**The President, African Council of Optometry –
Optom Frank Magupa**

**PresidentElect, African Council of Optometry –
Optom Ayukotang**

Director, Mygene Dx – Prof Kumar Md

**Former Principal of Elite School of Optometry and
Freelance Optometrist – Optom R. Krishna Kumar**

**Director, Twin Tech Business Academy and
Medical Social Activist – Mr Mahalingam**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Botswana Optometrists Association (BOA) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that is registered with the Registrar of Societies since 26 March 2012. It represents both Opticians and Optometrists who are registered with the Botswana Health Professions Council and are currently practicing in Botswana. It encourages its members to practice the highest standard of eyecare services in Botswana.

BOA acts as a representative body of the Opticians and Optometrists in their dealings with Governmental bodies like Ministry of Health, Botswana Health Professions Council, Medical Insurance Providers, Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry & Manpower, Botswana Medical Regulatory body and other relevant organization. It also provides charitable eye care services to benefit Botswana, that include free vision screening, free management of certain eye conditions, provision of spectacles and provision of educative materials to promote eye care awareness and prevent blindness.

BOA, that represents its 45 members, continues to be in good standing at the African Council of Optometry and the World Council of Optometry, the International bodies that BOA is affiliated to. BOA leadership has been nominated as the Public Health Committee Chairperson, with their Executive individual member representation at the different committees of the African Council of Optometry. It is also a humble moment to note that Botswana is also represented for the first time, at the Public Health Committee of the World Council of Optometry.

BOA leadership has also sponsored the annual trophy to the best twinning Lions Clubs in Botswana for eye-care service activity, in memory of the Late Optom Rejoice Mohamadi - pioneer in Optometry clinical diagnostic field, Botswana.

BOA continues to leap forward under the current dynamic leadership and team work of each and every hard working individual on the Executive Board.

I am informed that the current Executive Board, not only introduced a unique Genetic course that is one of its kind in the African Continent, but also managed to acquire a generous sponsorship of P72,347.74- from the course sponsor –Novartis, South African Division, for the benefit of all the members at no cost at all. Quite a big feat to have accomplished in 10 years.

Human Genome mapping and the knowledge of Genomics has entered the clinical arena of medical practice. My Gene Dx Academy, India provides medical genetic services including genetic counselling, support to families affected with genetic ocular disorders and also performs research in the field of Genetics. Prof Kumar, MD

5
who is trained in India, United States of America and New Zealand, works on ocular genomics, genetic counselling and epidemiology.

He has published 125 peer reviewed papers and has counselled over 12,000 genetic disorder patients. He is the former Deputy Director of Research, Professor of Genetics & Molecular Biology at the globally renowned Eye Institute-Sankara Nethralaya, India. He is currently the Director of Research, Narayan Nethralaya, Bangalore, India. He is also the Visiting Associate of Ophthalmic Genetics & Clinical Services, National Eye Institute, USA.

The BOA Genetic course was the outcome of brainstorming of the Education Sub-Committee led by Optom Seabelo Maje and the current Executive Board of BOA under the mentorship of Optom Thanuja Panicker, with the My Gene Dx Academic Team, India, led by the Internationally renowned

6
Genetic Scientist Prof Kumar MD, on the 16th of September 2021.

This was followed by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties and course commencement of its first batch of 12 in March 2022.

Today, we are celebrating the course completion and handing over certificates of the 11 candidates, from the first batch, who attended 12 weekly sessions from 11th March 2022 and appeared for online exams on 23rd June 2022, under the guidance of the Internationally renowned Genetic Professor Kumar MD.

I extend my hearty congratulations to the 11 candidates who shall be receiving their course completion certificates today online. We acknowledge and extend our gratitude for his guidance on genetic counselling in Botswana.

7

I am informed that BOA Executive Board is working on establishing an exclusive office as per the norms of the new Registrar of Societies Act 2022. I wish them success in this endeavor as well as the upcoming continuous professional development plan. I further appreciate every individual of the BOA Executive Board for the selfless efforts towards their profession.

PULA!

