

See What's on the Horizon at Glaucoma 360's Unique Innovation Forum

The conference, sponsored by the Glaucoma Research Foundation, begins February 8, 2024.

Vision specialists can't necessarily see the future, but they can come close at Glaucoma 360, a unique gathering dedicated to addressing the leading cause of irreversible blindness. The 3-day event, to be held in February 2024, includes the New Horizons Forum, which unites clinicians, scientists, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and regulators in the quest for glaucoma innovation.

More than just a conference, Glaucoma 360 is a true hybrid event—a combination of collaboration, learning, celebration, real-time innovation, and inspiration. Held February 8–10, 2024, at the iconic Westin St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, the gathering will commence with a gala honoring donors to Glaucoma Research Foundation. New Horizons, a one-of-a-kind forum focused on glaucoma innovation, takes place on February 9th. Continuing education programs complete the event on February 10th.

CREATING THE FUTURE IN PARTNERSHIP

Quite possibly the only vision event of its kind, New Horizons brings a diverse array of partners together to jumpstart advances in glaucoma care. Clinicians, researchers, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, regulators—all are present to network, learn about glaucoma developments, and collaborate toward next-generation care.

The New Horizons Forum is ideal for innovators who want to bring practical solutions to market. "Getting new diagnostics, therapies, and devices off the ground can be difficult," says vision scientist and industry leader Adrienne Graves, PhD,

who co-founded Glaucoma 360 with Andrew Iwach, MD, executive director for the Glaucoma Center of San Francisco (Figure 1). "Venture capitalists often don't invest in innovative ideas until there is clinical data. And for a start-up, getting data can be costly." New Horizons, Dr. Graves believes, is the chance for budding entrepreneurs to talk to seasoned, successful executives and to learn more about how to get early-stage funding. "You can meet people who can help you get to a place where VCs will be interested," she says.

This gathering is also a must for practitioners who strive to be up-to-date on promising new innovations geared toward improving glaucoma management. "I look forward to it every year, knowing I always learn something new that enhances my ability to inform patients of the new, promising innovations, while in the meantime helping manage their glaucoma today," says Dr. Iwach. "Knowledge is indeed power, and empowering patients with encouraging updates helps bring them comfort as well as hope of a brighter future for people struggling with glaucoma," says Dr. Iwach. "When patients say they're worried about their vision, I can tell them exactly what we have in the pipeline."

TRANSFORMING GLAUCOMA CARE: ADDRESSING UNMET NEEDS

One highly anticipated New Horizons Forum session will spotlight the unmet care needs of glaucoma patients and how innovators can step up to these challenges. Ronald L. Fellman, MD, a specialist in medical and surgical treatments with Glaucoma Associates of Texas and Diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology, and



Figure 1. It's been 13 years since Glaucoma Research Foundation board members Adrienne Graves, PhD, and Andrew Iwach, MD, launched the first New Horizons Forum, which continues to grow year over year. "Data show us that, once people have experienced this event, they tend to come back. And we are committed to making it worth their trip," says Dr. Iwach. "Clinicians who attend say that, in 1 day, they can find out everything that's happening in glaucoma care—new developments they can talk to their patients about," says Dr. Graves.

Leon W. Herndon, Jr., MD, professor of ophthalmology at Duke Eye Center, will lead a panel discussion exploring the gaps in glaucoma care—and how closing those gaps can transform the care experience for patients and clinicians (Figure 2).

"Glaucoma remains the world's leading cause of irreversible blindness," says Dr. Fellman. "One way to reduce blindness is to better define the unmet needs that continue to afflict individuals with glaucoma and affect the entire glaucoma community."



Figure 2. Ronald Fellman, MD (left), and Leon Herndon, Jr., MD (right), will lead a panel discussion about the gaps in glaucoma care.

Panelists will investigate the full spectrum of care gaps, from diagnosis and monitoring, to understanding the pathophysiology of glaucoma, to therapeutics and patient outcomes. Screening that minimizes false results; better telemedicine; robust and sensitive biomarkers to diagnose more accurately; insight into the factors that influence susceptibility, onset, and progression; new surgical approaches and co-therapies—these are just some of the topics Drs. Fellman and Herndon expect panelists to explore. “We hope to stimulate clinicians, industry, researchers, healthcare policy makers, and others to think outside the box,” says Dr. Herndon.

HERE'S TO THE DOERS! GLAUCOMA DEVICES

Another 2024 New Horizons Forum session will showcase innovation in glaucoma devices by shining a spotlight on “the doers”—the clinicians, scientists, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders who translate novel ideas into devices that change the lives of glaucoma patients.

“In the realm of vision innovation, there are those who observe, those who critique, and those who do,” says John Berdahl, MD, glaucoma surgeon, inventor, and co-moderator of the glaucoma devices panel. “We want to celebrate those who are fighting every day to provide unique products that can help manage this humbling disease.”

With several vision care innovations on his resumé—he founded Equinox Ophthalmic, Inc., which created a non-surgical, non-pharmacologic way to lower

IOP; in addition to Astigmatismfix.com, ExpertOpinion.MD, Melt Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Interfeen Biologics, Inc.—Dr. Berdahl knows first-hand what it takes to be a “doer” and will share insights that help others bring new devices to market. His co-moderator on the panel will be Arsham Sheybani, MD, associate professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences at Washington University, whose specialties include glaucoma and surgical management of the anterior chamber of the eye. “I love the advanced technology in the vision field,” says Dr. Sheybani. “In ophthalmology, I’ve been able to tap into my childhood desire to build things by being involved in designing new devices.”

Drs. Berdahl and Sheybani anticipate a lively panel discussion that will cover devices with the potential to improve glaucoma diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring. “First and foremost, attendees want and expect us to showcase the technologies that could help mitigate disease,” says Dr. Berdahl. “Our hope is that clinicians and others who attend will find a way to come alongside the ‘doers’ and help them move care forward. If you care about glaucoma innovation, you won’t want to miss New Horizons.” ■

Glaucoma 360 starts February 8th, 2024, at the legendary Westin St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. The New Horizons Forum happens on February 9th. Learn more and register for all Glaucoma 360 events, including two no-fee continuing education programs, at glaucoma360.org.

GLAUCOMA INNOVATORS CREATE COLLABORATIVE ATMOSPHERE

The New Horizons Forum's steering committee reads like a who's-who of vision movers and shakers dedicated to making this event informative, productive, inspiring, and fun. All will be there to listen, learn, share, and collaborate on next-generation glaucoma care.

ADRIENNE GRAVES, PHD

- Glaucoma 360 Co-Founder and Co-Chair
- Chairman, Retinal Degeneration Fund; Board of Directors, Glaucoma Research Foundation; Implantsdata, JelliSee, Nicox, NVasc, Ocular Therapeutics, Opus Genetics, Surface Ophthalmics, Qlaris Bio, and TherOptix

ANDREW IWACH, MD

- Glaucoma 360 Co-Founder and Co-Chair
- Executive Director, Glaucoma Center of San Francisco
- Chair, Glaucoma Research Foundation Board of Directors

JOHN BERDAHL, MD

- Partner, Vance Thompson Vision; Professor of Surgery, University of South Dakota; Founder of Equinox Ophthalmic, Inc., Balance Ophthalmics, ExpertOpinion.MD, Interfeen Biologics, Inc., Astigmatismfix, and Melt Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

L. JAY KATZ, MD, FACS

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