



## **Mission to Eliminate Cornea Blindness in UP Sees Quick Progress with new KGMU UP Community Eye Bank**

*~The eye bank is a first of its kind public-private partnership that aims to accelerate Uttar Pradesh's efforts to eliminate corneal blindness ~*

**Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (June 6, 2017) – Prof MLB Bhatt VC King George's Medical University Dr. Apjit Kaur Acting HOD, Dr. Arun Sherma, Incharge Eye Bank, Ms. Claire Bonilla SightLife and Dr. Madhu Bhaduria CMO Sitapur Eye Hospital announced Rapid Growth Success of KGMU UP Community Eye Bank**, which is a state-of-the-art eye bank with a mission to restoring sight to the corneal blind.

The eye bank was inaugurated on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 and has already resulted in over 110 sight restoring transplants to the community of Uttar Pradesh. The eye bank is instrumental in supporting eye/cornea donation through all districts for 24x7 collection activities. We encourage the community to report all deaths 24x7 to the toll free donation hotline by dialing 1919.

"Last year with our best efforts, KGMU did 67 transplants. I'm happy to share within the first five months of operations of this eye bank, we have already surpassed that figure and completed over 110 transplants. I'm very confident we are now better placed working toward elimination of corneal blindness in Uttar Pradesh. I'm very enthused with the performance" says KGMU Vice Chancellor Prof MLB Bhatt.

The cornea is the top layer of the eye, not the entire eye. Anyone can donate corneas after death by reporting all deaths to the eye bank 24x7 by dialing toll free 1919. The procedure only takes 15-20 minutes, there is no expense to the family and each cornea can give sight to a person waiting in blindness" explains Atul Kapoor, SightLife Vice President of Asia.

Supported by **The Hans Foundation**, the eye bank partnership between King George's Medical University, Sitapur Eye Hospital Trust and SightLife, is the first of its kind public-private partnership in Uttar Pradesh and was inaugurated on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016. The eye bank provides a full scope of services ranging from counselling for families, cornea/eye collection and processing, distribution of corneas to surgeons, and training for technicians and surgeons. All is done to ultimately restore sight to the corneal blind.

The eye bank is operated by the global not-for-profit organization, SightLife, and is located inside the trauma centre at KGMU. Aided by the highly trained and dedicated 24x7 staff, the Community Eye Bank has advanced microscope technology for precise determination of cornea suitability. The facility is integrated with the national helpline number 1919 which will connect all the enquiries directly to the community eye bank.

*"Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India, with two-thirds the population of the U.S.," explained Dr. Arun K Sharma, Incharge Eye Bank . "The U.S. performed almost 50,000 transplants last year, whereas in UP only 650 cornea transplants were done. This eye bank is enabling us to provide life-changing surgeries and restore sight of so many more people waiting in darkness. And we couldn't be more thrilled."*

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