



## **Sustainable Eye Care Facilities**

One of the Combat Blindness Foundation's partners, the L.V. Prasad Eye Institute in Hyderabad, India, has developed an appropriate model that ensures resources are used efficiently and equitably. The major components of this model are vision centers, community surgical centers, tertiary centers and centers of excellence. CBF has chosen to focus on the first two levels of service because of the low cost, the pressing need to create eye care facilities within reach of poor patients and the ability of the centers to eradicate 75 percent of the blindness in the areas where they are established.

**Vision centers** deliver primary eye care to a target population of 50,000. They are fully equipped for performing ophthalmic evaluation and refraction, dispensing glasses and diagnosing potentially blinding diseases. The vision center technicians have the ability to screen for refractive error, and treat trachoma, onchocerciasis and Vitamin A deficiency, thus covering 25 percent of causes of avoidable blindness. On average, between 20 and 25 patients are screened daily at the vision centers. Generally, 25-35 percent of the patients require glasses, which are available at a very low cost. More than 20 percent receive referrals for medical or surgical interventions at the community surgical centers.

Vision centers are financially self-sufficient within three years by adopting a "same care for all/ pay as you are able" plan. Patients who have the ability to pay cover 40 percent of the costs for services on a sliding scale fee structure. The same high-quality eye care services are provided to all paying and non-paying patients, with a cost recovery of 115 percent within one year. This is primarily due to the sale of eye glasses.

**Community surgical centers** provide secondary-level eye care, including diagnostic evaluation, cataract surgical services, minor surgical services and community-based rehabilitation services, and serve as eye donation centers. Physicians at these centers treat glaucoma as well as conditions that are treatable at vision centers, thus covering 75 percent of causes of avoidable blindness. Each community surgical center serves a target population of 500,000, with input from ten outlying vision centers.

Each community surgical center treats 20,000-25,000 outpatients each year and physicians there annually perform 2,000-2,500 surgeries. Ninety percent of those surgeries are cataract surgeries. As the center matures, surgical services for glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and other eye diseases are added. Using the same "pay as able" formula, each community surgical center is financially self-sufficient within three to five years.