



***For Immediate Release***

## **Tawiakwaa CHPS Zone in Awutu Senya District, Central Region, Ghana, to be Declared Avoidable Blindness-Free by Operation Eyesight Universal and Ghana Health Service**

*Media are invited to attend the declaration on Thursday, December 12  
10:00 a.m. at Nyakokwaa District Assemble Basic School Park*

**Accra, Ghana, December 12, 2024:** Operation Eyesight Universal and Ghana Health Service (Awutu Senya District Health Directorate) are making an Avoidable Blindness-Free Declaration for the Tawiakwaa CHPS Zone in Awutu Senya District on Thursday, December 12, 2024. The declaration is part of an ongoing multi-year Hospital-based Community Eye Health Project between three partners, Operation Eyesight Universal, Watborg Eye Services and Ghana Health Service Awutu Senya District Health Directorate.

Ghana is severely affected by high prevalence of avoidable blindness and vision loss, and Awutu Senya District, which is rural, has even higher rates. In 2019, the population of Ghana was approximately 31 million, with 0.74 per cent (229,400 people), estimated to be blind from all causes. Severe visual impairment was 1.07% (331, 700) people according to the 2019 study, [\*Assessing the Progress towards Achieving “VISION 2020: The Right to Sight” Initiative in Ghana\*](#). The rural Awutu Senya District had a 1.0 per cent rate of blindness, with 1.31 per cent of the population living with severe vision loss and 1.36 per cent with moderate visual impairment, according to the [\*Ghana National Blindness and Visual Impairment Study conducted by Operation Eyesight Universal in 2015\*](#).

### **Community Eye Health Care Project to Benefit People in Awutu Senya District**

To reduce avoidable blindness and vision loss in Awutu Senya District from 1.0 per cent to 0.3 per cent, the Hospital-based Community Eye Health Project was implemented in 2022. The project impacts the population of 161,460 people living in 174 communities (2021 Ghana Population and Housing Census Report) and seeks to address an estimated 3,700 people living with vision loss. The project is further divided into zones.

An Avoidable Blindness-Free declaration means that all cases of avoidable blindness and vision loss in a specified area have been addressed and that the people in that area have access to local eye health care. The project included mapping the villages and population, training 60 government community health nurses to be primary eye health workers, and establishing a local vision centre for comprehensive eye exams and eyeglass prescriptions.

Community health nurses were trained to identify eye conditions, such as refractive error and cataract, using the World Health Organization’s Primary Eye Care Manual and measure visual acuity. The community health nurses conduct door-to-door surveys in the villages. When people are identified with vision impairment, they are referred to the local vision centre for



comprehensive eye exams and eyeglass prescriptions. Those in need of further care are referred on to Watborg Eye Services for more advanced treatment, including eye surgery.

Emmanuel Kumah, Operation Eyesight Universal Country Director, Ghana, says, “The declaration of Tawiakwa CHPS Zone as Avoidable Blindness-Free is a practical demonstration of our tagline at Operation Eyesight Universal, *For All The World To See*, plus the power of partnerships.”

### **Impact of Restored Vision**

Preventing blindness and restoring sight transform lives of those who are impacted. Restored vision has many benefits, including better access to quality education for children, employment for adults and independence for seniors. When an entire zone is declared Avoidable Blindness-Free, it benefits the entire community.

### **Impact Stories from Awutu Senya District**

There are many stories of the people impacted by this project. These include:

- Anastasia, who reclaimed her independence and livelihood after attending a local Operation Eyesight Universal eye health care screening camp. After being diagnosed with and treated for an eye growth, she is now back to running her successful business. Read her story here: [With sight restored, Anastasia reclaims her independence - Operation Eyesight.](#)
- Joana Annobil, who became an ophthalmic nurse through support from Operation Eyesight Universal, and who took her expertise back to her home in Awutu Senya District. See her video here: [Meet our people: Joana Annobil - Operation Eyesight.](#)

[Operation Eyesight Universal is a registered charitable organization in Ghana. For more information about Operation Eyesight Universal and how you can support its work, visit \[operationeyesight.com\]\(http://operationeyesight.com\).](#)

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### **About Operation Eyesight Universal [operationeyesight.com](http://operationeyesight.com)**

Operation Eyesight Universal is an international development organization that works to prevent blindness and restore sight. Its vision is the elimination of avoidable vision loss. Founded in Canada in 1963, Operation Eyesight is a global community spanning four continents – Africa, Europe, North America and South Asia. Its vision is global and the focus local, with teams on the ground in communities of work. Through activities like community outreach, water and sanitation projects, and health education, Operation Eyesight is addressing the root causes of avoidable vision loss which contribute to [six United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: no poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and partnerships for the goals.](#)

### **About Operation Eyesight Universal’s work in Ghana [operationeyesight.com/ghana](http://operationeyesight.com/ghana)**

Operation Eyesight Universal has been working in Ghana since 2006, partnering with communities in 40 districts. Work includes hospital strengthening, community eye health,

[operationeyesight.com/newsroom](http://operationeyesight.com/newsroom)



integrated eye health and disease control. Our programs are designed to provide a full range of eye health care services, allowing us to address common eye conditions such as [cataract](#) and [uncorrected refractive error](#), as well as more complex cases such as [diabetic retinopathy](#) and [glaucoma](#).

**About Watborg Eye Services** [Watborg Eye Services \(WES\) | LinkedIn](#)

Watborg Eye Services is one of the leading providers of eye health care in the Central Region of Ghana, with a track record of organizing screening programs in the communities, training healthcare professionals, creating awareness and facilitating cataract outreaches, to bring sight restoration to underserved populations. Watborg Eye Services was established in 2006 with support from Operation Eyesight Universal and is operated by Dr. Boateng Wiafe, Operation Eyesight's technical advisor. It is located at Awutu Bereku, Kese-wo-kan Junction on Winneba the Road. The objectives of Watborg Eye Services are to provide high-quality, affordable, comprehensive eye care services to those who need it most, and to train eye care professionals.

**Photos and Interviews**

Photos of the project can be shared and interviews can be arranged in person or by phone.

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