Investing in the Eye Institute
At the WVU Eye Institute, we understand sight’s critical role. Our mission as part of the state’s flagship university is to prevent blindness and restore vision for the people of West Virginia. We do this by providing the latest medical and surgical eye care, discovering new treatments, rehabilitating those who have lost vision, and reaching out to the community to identify and treat eye diseases.

Through A State of Minds: The Campaign for West Virginia’s University, we aim to leverage the knowledge created here and put it to work to benefit the people of West Virginia, the country, and the world.

Sight is central. From the time you open your eyes in the morning until you close them at night, your eyes process millions of pieces of information, allowing you to navigate your world. Sight’s relationship to overall health, however, is largely overlooked. Vision impairment and eye diseases are major public health problems. Among older people, reduced vision leads to isolation and falls and can lead to premature death. In children, vision loss complicates development and education. Vision changes are common signs of diabetes and high blood pressure. Some eye diseases, like glaucoma, aren’t easily detected without an exam until vision is lost.
A nationally recognized center for vision care, research, education, and outreach, the WVU Eye Institute provides the full range of eye care under one roof—from routine exams to subspecialty medical and surgical treatment and laser vision correction. Each year, we treat over 35,000 West Virginians and patients from surrounding states.

The Eye Institute offers patients the most up-to-date care along with the latest diagnostic and therapeutic equipment. This, coupled with the passion our team of dedicated teachers, scientists, and staff brings to the task, makes the Eye Institute second to none.

We have a special mission to serve West Virginia’s children. Our pediatric ophthalmologists manage eye health in the first two decades of life and treat vision problems resulting from injuries or disease that could result in childhood blindness.

Our Children’s Vision Rehabilitation Program is a national model for supporting children with low vision and blindness. The program improves education, independence, and quality of life for these children through clinical evaluations, teacher education, parent support, and an optical device lending library.

Through the Appalachian Vision Outreach Program, we provide education about vision health, eye screenings and eye care to the underserved of remote West Virginia. By developing local partnerships we are able to bring vision care to communities in the most rural regions of West Virginia.

Our services are available without regard to patients’ ability to pay; we provide more than $500,000 in charity eye care to adults and children each year.

The Eye Institute’s Vision Research Center is uncovering new treatments and cures. Our researchers are making blind mice see—literally. We’ve had success in curing blindness in mice bred to have Lebers’ Congenital Amaurosis, the same condition that causes blindness in infants. We are improving our results before seeking approval for human trials.

Our well-respected residency program includes three years of training in comprehensive ophthalmology, as well as specialty training in the areas of medical retina, surgical retina, glaucoma, pediatric ophthalmology, neuro-ophthalmology, oculoplastics, uveitis, and cornea. WVU is one of a few ophthalmology training programs offering virtual reality surgical training experience to its ophthalmology residents. We also offer two fellowships, one in ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery and the other in vitreo-retinal surgery.
As the only center for pediatric vision care in West Virginia, the WVU Eye Institute plays a critical role in providing specialized vision care for babies and children.
A State of Minds: The Campaign for West Virginia’s University is a way for us to come together—grateful patients who have benefitted from the Eye Institute’s care and friends who believe in the promise of our work. We ask you to consider investing in the following priorities that will transform lives by preserving sight and promoting vision care.

**Endowed Faculty Positions**
The Eye Institute competes with institutions around the country for the best faculty. Endowed chairs and professorships will give us an edge in recruitment: these positions entice top faculty because of the prestige associated with holding a named chair and the assurance of dependable income to fuel their research. Private support for endowed chairs will draw more talented teachers and researchers to WVU, where their talents and skills will help conquer West Virginia’s most pressing vision problems.

Our faculty includes one neuro-ophthalmologist, a sub-specialist who treats patients with problems involving the relationship between the eye and the brain—the only such specialist in West Virginia. Only seven are trained in the nation each year. We would like to attract another of these scarce experts to meet patient demand.

Through the campaign, we also endeavor to create a Vision Research Endowment. Interested patients and friends can invest in cutting-edge clinical and translational research in glaucoma, macular degeneration, and the genetic basis of eye disease. With increased support, physician-scientists and basic research scientists can advance discovery into the causes of eye diseases and develop new treatments.

**Investment Total: $7 Million**

**Student Support**
Through the Eye Institute, West Virginia University has the state’s only training program for ophthalmologists. Physicians who choose to specialize in ophthalmology complete a three-year program following medical school as well as an internship.
In addition, the Eye Institute offers two fellowship programs for ophthalmologists choosing to subspecialize in retina or oculoplastics. Many of our graduates establish practices right here in West Virginia.

Supporting students ensures the future of vision care for the Mountain State. We ask like-minded friends to consider a gift to this new endowment, which will help provide the best training for tomorrow’s ophthalmologists.

**Investment Total: $650,000**

**Opportunity Funds**

What will be the next breakthrough in vision science? And what will it take to capitalize on that development’s promise? No one knows. But given the Eye Institute’s track record in research and patient care, it may well occur here. Through the campaign, we ask committed friends to help establish an Opportunity Fund. This endowment could be used to pioneer new types of vision care, encourage innovation in patient care and research, and generate sustainable support for charity care.

**Investment Total: $750,000**

**Naming the WVU Eye Institute**

An opportunity is available to underwrite multiple transformational initiatives that can benefit the people of West Virginia and secure the Eye Institute’s position as a leader in vision care education, research and service. Naming the Eye Institute will also create an opportunity to recognize an individual or individuals most influential and meaningful to the donor.
“Your support will strengthen all that’s good about the Eye Institute and ensure the future of excellent eye care for all West Virginians.”

— Lee Wiley, M.D., Interim Chair
One of the finest rewards of the practice of medicine is the knowledge that the prevention, treatment, and research we practice have a profound positive impact on the lives of individuals. The ability to see makes all the difference in a person’s independence, mobility, and enjoyment of life.

Thanks to the WVU Eye Institute, older West Virginians can preserve their sight for many additional years—and this ability is often the difference between living in their own homes or a nursing home. Children with vision impairments participate more fully in family and school activities and lead full, productive lives in adulthood. Adults struck with eye diseases and injuries are far more likely to remain sighted and continue their careers and social activities.

Thanks to past support from friends like you, the WVU Eye Institute leads the way in technology, offering the most advanced and intricate imaging and treatment devices. We lead the way in caring for veterans. We lead the way in caring for the uninsured and the underinsured. And we lead the way in providing scarce sub-specialists—physicians like neuro-ophthalmologists and pediatric ophthalmologists—priceless resources for those who suffer from eye diseases and blinding conditions.

To continue to lead the way, we need you. That’s why I hope you’ll join me now in making a gift to the Eye Institute through A State of Minds: The Campaign for West Virginia’s University. Your support will strengthen all that’s good about the Eye Institute and ensure the future of excellent eye care for all West Virginians.

Lee Wiley, M.D.
Interim Chair
The WVU Health Sciences Center is West Virginia's healthcare, education, and research linchpin. Dedicated to serving our state and our world by transforming lives and eliminating health disparities, we are poised to enhance the well-being and quality of life in West Virginia and beyond.

As an integral part of *A State of Minds: The Campaign for West Virginia's University*, your support for the WVU Health Sciences Center is about investing in the values, intellect, and commitment that define one of the most exciting academic medical centers in the country. The WVU HSC will drive national and global dialogue on healing, teaching, and discovery for decades to come.

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