



**On Friday 10th September 2021 SOA-USA met as part of the annual Investiture of the Priory of St John in the USA.**

### **Speakers**

Dr. Bruce Spivey, KStJ, Honorary Treasurer, SOA  
U.S. Priory Hospitaller David Pyott, CBE, OStJ  
Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali, CEO, SJEHG  
Dr. Charles Mosteller, Secretary, US SOA  
Dr. David Verity, Order Hospitaller  
Dr. Hana Hussein, Gaza  
Dr. Raja Al Masri, Jerusalem

### **SOA Symposium Boosts Research, Education and Training for Hospital**

The fourth St. John Ophthalmic Association (SOA) USA Symposium was held September 10 in Boston. Established in 2015, SOA is formed of ophthalmologists, optometrists, other physicians and healthcare practitioners from across the world. The group exists to coordinate the post-graduate ophthalmic activities and advance teaching, training and research of the St John Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG). It is our goal to reinforce the SJEHG as the preeminent teaching hospital in the Holy Land.

Dr. Bruce Spivey, KStJ, Honorary Treasurer, SOA, kicked off the symposium with an entertaining and informative history of the Order from 1099 to 2021 and the Hospital history since 1882. His valuable perspective laid the groundwork for helping participants understand the background that is pertinent to the SOA.

U.S. Priory Hospitaller David Pyott, CBE, OStJ, gave an economic overview of SJEHG noting that despite the global pandemic staff have been able to successfully treat patients at all of its facilities. Although there was a 20 percent decline in patients served in 2020, this number has more than recovered in 2021, with patients served increasing by 26 percent (YTD July). More than half of the Hospital's income is derived from donations and government grants. Within donations, the U.S. Priory is the largest contributor.

A new video highlighting the mission and work of SJEHG was previewed along with an update on its clinical operations from Dr. Ahmad Ma'ali, CEO, SJEHG. Dr. Ma'ali laid out the comprehensive offering of services across all ophthalmic sub-specialties and the geographic reach from Jerusalem, throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Dr. Mohammed Daraghmeah, Suzanna Majaj, and Abeer Zuiteer, who were sponsored through the U.S. Priory Nurse and Doctor Initiative, were featured in the video as well as a number of patient testimonials, footage of all of the facilities and the mobile outreach clinic.

Dr. Charles Mosteller, Secretary, US SOA, gave insight into US-based activities and membership development. He highlighted the growth in the US organization since its launch event held in Chicago in 2018 and plans for future development and programming. The next meeting of SOA will be held during the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Convention in New Orleans in November.

In a pre-recorded message, London-based Order Hospitaller Dr. David Verity presented the global vision for SOA internationally, highlighting the organization's accomplishments to date and ambitious goals for the future: "SOA is working to bring together the best of St John in one organization to promote and develop our medical expertise and teaching, both regionally and further afield," Dr. Verity stated in his talk. Building on recent SOA symposia in the U.S., Australia and Canada, Dr. Verity will offer new symposia in the UK and Sweden in 2022.

The SOA series of symposia offer an opportunity for some of our talented ophthalmologists in the Holy Land to showcase their work and research. Dr. Hana Hussein, a glaucoma specialist at the Jerusalem Eye Hospital gave a glaucoma case study that was moderated by Dr. Christie Morse, MStJ, a pediatric ophthalmologist in New Hampshire. Dr. Raja Al Masri, also from the Jerusalem Eye Hospital, presented an ocular oncology case that was moderated by Dr. Suzanne Freitag, MStJ, an oculoplastic surgeon at Massachusetts Eye & Ear Hospital.

As our Prior stated during the 2021 Boston Investiture Weekend, the Order is working to increase its membership of people from diverse backgrounds, religions and ethnicities. In this context, there is great opportunity to expand membership from the healthcare profession because the ophthalmology and optometry professions have major representation of women and minorities in their ranks and rapidly grasp the needs of the SJEHG given their professional experience.

The symposium concluded with an appeal to support the nurse and doctor initiative with continued donations that are much needed to pay staff salaries. Many regional chapters have already started funding outreach for the initiative with 12 staff members being funded to date. With always present cost pressures as we serve needy populations at low or no cost we are dependent on donations from the Priories.

For more information about SOA or to view the symposium in its entirety, visit <http://www.soa.global>.