



Advocacy and Policy

One policy change can have a catalytic impact on eliminating corneal blindness

Creating policies that reduce the burden of corneal blindness.

Creating a policy environment that enables eye donation, ensures quality corneal tissue and increases access to care is crucial to reduce the burden of corneal blindness. The Advocacy and Policy program provides guidance on effective laws, policies and regulations in countries where the need is greatest.

The Need

In many low- and middle-income countries, there are few policies that support eye donation and access to eye care. Ultimately, this perpetuates the burden of corneal blindness in these countries – leaving many individuals waiting for the sight-restoring transplant they need.

Our Focus

SightLife is working diligently with governments, partners and key stakeholders to advocate for policies that increase access to donors and eye care. We focus on building support, collaborating on policy development and supporting implementation of adopted policies.

There are many ways to create a strong policy environment. To increase access to donors, countries can adopt a mandatory notification of death, establish first-person consent or establish a national donor registry. To increase access to quality tissue, countries can adopt eye banking standards or quality accreditation or practices. To increase access to care, countries can include eye health within the primary health care system or launch cost-effective prevention programs to treat conditions before they lead to corneal blindness.

POLICY CHANGE

23

countries have accessed SightLife's policy best practices guide

REACH





Policy wins for eye banking in China

China is in the process of developing new national policy and guidelines on eye bank operations since the former regulations were abolished in 2017. With support from SightLife, the working group under the National Blindness Prevention Committee adopted global best practices into the new eye banking operations manual, setting standards for key procedures that guarantee tissue quality and safety for corneal transplants in the country. SightLife will continue working with Chinese stakeholders to develop more policies that will make the eye banking system affordable, accessible and sustainable.



SightLife’s guide on policy, regulation and advocacy brings together the best practices of eye bank development from various countries and regions around the world. It clearly details the best legal policy tools and framework for corneal donation and transplantation system development. It is an incredible resource for the eye banking system in China in order to truly develop in a healthy and sustainable way. ”

-Prof. Ningli Wang
President of China Blindness
Prevention Committee

Progress and Scaling

Working to influence policy is a long-term strategy as it can take patience and persistence to shift opinions, engage in the policy development process and implement robust plans. However, SightLife is making great strides in many areas – with jurisdictions adopting policies supporting prevention, quality standards for eye banking and even a countywide strategy for addressing corneal blindness. These are just a few of the policies currently being targeted, but there are many more that need to be addressed.

In addition, SightLife has effectively scaled the Advocacy and Policy work beyond one-on-one guidance with the Policy Best Practices Guide. This in-depth tool provides a step-by-step process for local, state/provincial or national governments to use when updating or creating policies that will have lasting effects towards increasing eye donation and access to quality tissue. Access the guide at www.sightlife.org/policyguide.

JOIN US

SightLife is honored to partner with a distinguished group of surgeons and ophthalmic personnel, companies, and individuals who believe in the power of sight as a means to create a better future. These partnerships empower SightLife to expand its programs and services across the globe. We invite you to join us.

Learn more about how you can find a role in eliminating corneal blindness: www.sightlife.org/joinus



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