



The history of the regulation of the practice of optometry in Trinidad and Tobago can be traced to 1933, when Opticians who test sight were first required to register under the Optician's (Registration) Ordinance Number 10 of 1932. The Trinidad & Tobago Optical Association was then formed in 1939.

In 1959, a bill was introduced to create the Opticians Registration Council, where ophthalmic opticians would be recognized as optometrists and opticians who compound and dispense spectacles as dispensing opticians. The Trinidad and Tobago Opticians Registration Council was formed, and members were appointed by the Minister after consultation with the TT Optical Association.

Act 27 of 1987 - which would be known as the Opticians (Registration)(Amendment) Act - saw the regulation of the optical industry by law. For the first time, companies and firms practicing optometry or the practice of dispensing opticians were required to register under the Opticians Act. This is where the TT Optical Association was replaced by the Trinidad & Tobago Optometrists Association that we all know today.

The TTOA is committed to having the Optometric profession be a key player in healthcare, by promoting continuing professional development of optometrists, research and academic excellence.

Traditionally, local optometrists have gone to the UK, Scotland, Ireland, Canada and the US to be educated. Our fraternity now includes optometrists qualified in Nigeria and South Africa. In 2009, The University of the West Indies introduced the Department of Optometry and in 2013 we had the first batch of UWI optometrists.



Currently, there are 196 registered optometrists and over 70 registered optical firms. All optometrists, dispensing opticians and optical firms that supply spectacle frames, spectacle lenses and contact lenses must be registered with the Trinidad and Tobago Opticians Registration Council to legally practice.

For over 25 years, the TTOA has hosted annual education seminars and trade shows. This provides a forum for the entire optometric community (optometrists, opticians, optical assistants and auxiliary staff) to meet, learn and share ideas. These seminars attract vendors from the US, Canada and the UK, showcasing the latest equipment, frames, spectacle lenses, sunglasses, contact lenses and relevant pharmaceuticals.

We have collaborated with the City University, London, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, School of Optometry University of Waterloo, Southern College of Optometry, Memphis, Tennessee, as well as from our local optometrists and ophthalmologists. The lectures are set to international standards having COPE (Council on Optometrist Practitioner Education and/ or GOC (The General Optical Council UK) approval.

The current COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, dictated that TTOA embrace the new normal. The first ZOOM education seminar was held and turned restrictions into a regional outreach for education, going far beyond the local fraternity to Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Turks and Caicos.

Our Social Outreach has been restricted to our social media platforms via TTOA website, Facebook and Instagram pages. In past years the TTOA has done outreach in communities from Toco to Tobago and Jeffers Village to Port of Spain.



This year the annual General Meeting was held via Zoom and a new executive was elected. This Executive is an exciting mix of older and younger, foreign and UWI educated optometrists. It is the first time that a UWI optometry graduate has been elected to the role of president elect and will lead the TTOA in 2023. The future is surely bright as we go beyond 2020.

Newly Elected Committee Board Members for the term 2021 – 2023:



## TTOA

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO OPTOMETRISTS ASSOCIATION

### INTRODUCES ITS NEW COMMITTEE BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2021-2023





**Ozaze Okonedo**  
Doctor of Optometry



**TTOA PRESIDENT**  
**Lauren Paula Robinson**  
BSc (City University, London) MCOptom.



**TTOA PRESIDENT ELECT**  
**Stephanie Boodoo-Ramsaroop**  
BSc Optometry



**Nicholas Bhimsingh**  
BSc. Optometry (Hons)



**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
**Phillip Rossouw**  
B Optom



**TTOA TREASURER**  
**Vandana Persad-Seedial**  
BSc. Optometry (Hons.)  
BSc. Cell & Molecular Biology



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**Thalia Bruce**  
BSc. Optometry (Hons)  
BSc Science (general)