Dr. Virgilio Galvis Ramirez Wins the 2015 Lions/PAAO Award in Blindness Prevention

Oak Brook, Illinois, USA, June 23, 2015—Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) and the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology (PAAO) are pleased to announce Dr. Virgilio Galvis Ramirez of Colombia as the winner of the 2015 Lions/PAAO Award in Blindness Prevention.

Dr. Galvis is the Director of the ophthalmic center that carries his name in Bucaramanga, Colombia. He is also an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at the Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga, and a pioneer in blindness prevention care for the low-income population in Colombia. Dr. Galvis created the Ophthalmologic Foundation of Santander (FOS) in 1979 with a mission to “Help others to see” and to bring basic eye care services to rural areas where such services were not available. Additionally, the FOS Center has offered training courses on blindness prevention to national and international eye care professionals in partnership with the Christoffel Blindenmission (CBM) Foundation. During his term as Colombia’s Health Minister, Dr. Galvis spearheaded the integration of the VISION 2020 initiative into Colombia’s national eye care program goals. For these, and many more accomplishments, Dr. Galvis will be presented with the US$1,000 award during the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology’s XXXI Congress in Bogotá on August 5, 2015.

The Lions/PAAO Award in Blindness Prevention was created to recognize excellence in the field of blindness prevention. This award is presented on an annual basis to an ophthalmologist of the host country of the PAAO Regional Course or Congress to celebrate local efforts in blindness prevention. The award is made possible through the LCIF SightFirst program and consists of a US$1,000 grant and a travel budget.

“Through SightFirst, Lions have a long history of saving sight and preventing blindness. These successes would not possible without the hard work and accomplishments of ophthalmologists around the world,” said Past LCIF Chairperson Sid L. Scruggs, III. “We are proud to award this grant to a deserving individual who shares in our mission and has made an impact in preventing blindness.”

About Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF)
Lions Clubs International Foundation is the grant-making body of Lions Clubs International, the world’s largest volunteer service club organization. The LCIF SightFirst program, Lions’ flagship initiative, builds comprehensive eye care systems to fight the major causes of blindness and care for blind and visually impaired persons. Since 1990, the SightFirst program has helped restore sight to more than 30 million people around the world. Lions have raised more than $415 million to provide surgeries, to improve of hundreds of eye care facilities and train of thousands of eye care professionals. For more information, visit www.lcif.org.

About the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology (PAAO)
The Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology was founded in 1939. The PAAO is dedicated to
the prevention of blindness through lifelong education and cultural exchange among ophthalmologists in the western hemisphere. For more information, visit www.paaao.org.

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