Leading the Way in Eye Care

Alcon is harnessing the pace and power of technology to advance the development of eye care innovations for patient needs around the world. As the global leader in eye care, our mission is to provide innovative medicines and treatments that enhance quality of life by helping people see better. We do this by providing the most comprehensive and advanced portfolio of products and tools to eye care professionals (ECPs) so that they can deliver the best treatment outcomes to patients.

Alcon was founded in 1945 as a small ophthalmic shop in Fort Worth, Texas, and is now a division of Novartis, with sales of $10.8 billion in 2014. For more than 70 years, we have become the world’s leading eye care company through innovations rooted in customer insights, industry research and partnerships that enable our strategies to adapt to an ever-evolving healthcare environment. Today, our strong global presence reaches more than 90% of the globe – serving 180 markets, employing more than 25,000 people, and helping approximately 260 million patients in 2014 alone.

Our three businesses, surgical, pharmaceutical and vision care, address the full life cycle of eye care needs through a broad portfolio of high-quality ophthalmic surgical, pharmaceutical and lens care products, and contact lenses.

R&D Innovations and Unmatched Commitment

Alcon invests more than $1 billion annually in research and development (R&D) – a commitment that is unmatched in the private sector. We also have a global team of more than 2,000 highly skilled scientists, physicians, industry scholars and professionals dedicated to R&D. Our Centers of Excellence are located throughout the United States and Europe, and each have one common goal: to address unmet medical needs in eye care through medicines and treatments that work better, and are safer and easier for our patients to use. We aim to accomplish this by:

- Determining how to deliver better patient outcomes through precise and safer surgical procedures
- Expanding the capabilities of our intraocular lenses (IOLs)
- Accelerating vitreoretinal surgery for an improved recovery experience
- Developing lenses to help replicate the accommodation of the eye’s natural lens
- Providing super vision and comfort of contact lenses and IOLs through novel materials and technologies
- Developing novel drug and delivery combinations to eliminate the need for patient injections for retinal conditions
- Monitoring devices for glaucoma to help regulate intraocular pressure (IOP) inside the eye
- Entering into the gene therapy market to develop treatments for rare and orphan eye diseases

In addition, our robust R&D pipeline is complemented by strategic acquisitions and alliances, which accelerate the pace of discovery and delivery of essential eye care innovations to patients.
Evolving Eye Care Needs
We are bringing our extensive global experience in eye care leadership to patients who require products and therapies across a spectrum of conditions. Eye care needs are rapidly evolving. The aging population is creating an expanding pool of patients with an increased need for quality eye care, while at the same time; developing markets are demanding greater access to quality and sustainable care. Alcon’s businesses are well positioned to take advantage of this changing global landscape to address preventable blindness and create a foundation to deliver world-class eye care for future generations.

More than 285 million people are living with vision problems and impairment worldwide, yet 80% of vision problems can be prevented, treated or cured. Unfortunately, 90% of these individuals live in developing markets and do not have access to sustainable treatment or care. Globally, approximately 65% of the visually impaired are over the age of 50, equaling 20% of the world’s population.

Worldwide:
- 20 million are blind from cataracts – the leading cause of preventable blindness
- 14 million live with age-related macular degeneration
- 64 million live with glaucoma – the leading cause of global irreversible blindness
- 100 million live with diabetic retinopathy

Our Commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility
We know that the best eye care portfolio in the world can’t make a difference if it is not accessible to patients. Through our corporate giving efforts, Alcon helps to enhance sustainable access for patients, and reduce the incidence of preventable blindness and visual impairment, particularly in countries with insufficient access to eye care.

Since 1964, we have been committed to partnering globally with non-government organizations (NGOs), non-profits and advocacy groups that are uniquely suited to advance access to and improve eye care in their communities.

- Throughout our 70-year history, Alcon has supported organizations to help provide training to more than 350,000 physicians on new equipment, technologies and techniques to help improve the vision of patients they serve.
- Our Medical Missions program provides support to eye care professionals and non-profit organizations through donations of equipment, and surgical and pharmaceutical supplies. Each year, Alcon supports 43,000 eye-saving surgeries performed during more than 600 missions to over 80 countries.
- Through our 30-year partnership with Orbis, we provide financial support, surgical equipment, supplies and personnel for its Flying Eye Hospital, so patients in remote areas of the world can receive much-needed eye care and surgeries.
- For more than 25 years, Alcon has donated products to the Mercy Ships vision program, supporting surgeries and other treatments, as well as expansion into 14 countries in Africa. The Alcon Fellowship Training Program has enabled Mercy Ships doctors to provide hundreds of hours of surgical training to local surgeons in these countries.
- We partner with Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International, helping more than 400,000 disadvantaged individuals worldwide, to date, through product donations to provide eye care access to those in need.
- Alcon offers a suite of patient assistance programs to people to help them navigate reimbursement, insurance co-pays and financial hardships, so that no one is denied eye care.
Our Commitment to Education for Eye Care Professionals

Expanding access to quality eye care is impossible without first expanding access to education and hands-on training to eye care professionals.

The Alcon Medical Education Department supports educational initiatives that offer comprehensive, up-to-date and practical information on the medical and surgical management for effective healthcare of ophthalmic, otic, and/or nasal conditions and diseases.

Educational initiatives to assist health care professionals with promoting scientific knowledge, medical advancement and the delivery of effective medicines and therapies are funded by the Alcon Independent Medical Education Grant Office. Since 2011, Alcon has invested nearly $40 million to support more than 1,600 independent medical education grants, which reached more than 1.8 million ECPs worldwide.

Our culture is one of ideation and incubation, and this can also be seen in our new Alcon Experience Center, a state-of-the-art, hands-on training facility at our corporate headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas. When completed in November 2015, the Alcon Experience Center will offer eye care practitioners, students and residents more than 34,000 square feet of training space.

It will feature a fully equipped optometric office training area with exam lanes to simulate actual practice environments, while also facilitating training resources and knowledge transfer to improve surgeon confidence even during the most complicated ocular surgical procedures. The Center will also include a variety of interactive, innovative and flexible technologies to create a world-class training experience.

References: