

# *Mission Miracle Marks 10th Anniversary*

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Havana, July 1 (RHC) -- The free eye-surgery program known as Operation Miracle has benefited nearly two million 600,000 persons from 34 countries since its implementation in July 2004, announced Dr. Reinaldo Rios, Head of the National Ophthalmology Group of the Public Health Ministry.

In an exclusive interview with ACN, the medical director of the Ramon Pando Ferrer Cuban Ophthalmology Institute in Havana and founder of this program led by the governments of Cuba and Venezuela, highlighted that an significant number of patients were operated on for cataracts and other eye problems, like pterigium and strabismus.

No country has contributed to the struggle for the prevention of blindness in the area like Cuba, by way of Mission Miracle, specified the specialist, adding that the development of national ophthalmology, equipped with the highest technology, is acknowledged internationally.

At present, there are 43 Eye Centers in 13 states, with 55 surgical posts, where patients from over 30 nations are seen, pointed out Rios.

According to the World Health Organization, Mission Miracle -- aimed at offering surgery, free of charge, for persons of scant economic resources suffering from blindness or correctable visual deficiency -- takes on vital importance if we take into account that there are over 135 million visually impaired persons in the world, in addition to more than 40 million people that are blind due to preventable causes, over one million

and a half of which are children less than 16 years of age.

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