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**USC Roski Eye Institute experts featured in PBS documentary film,
SIGHT: The Story of Vision, debuting on World Sight Day**

Contact: Sherri Snelling at (949) 887-1903 or sherri.snelling@med.usc.edu
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LOS ANGELES – Documentary filmmaker, Kris Koenig, debuts *SIGHT: The Story of Vision* for broadcast on [PBS affiliates](#) nationwide starting October 13 – World Sight Day – featuring interviews with two [University of Southern California \(USC\) Roski Eye Institute](#) experts, [Rohit Varma](#), MD, MPH and [Mark Humayun](#), MD, PhD.

The one-hour documentary, narrated by [Sir Elton John](#), is a comprehensive look at the science, medicine and technology of human vision. The film includes several individual stories of those across the globe who are losing or have lost their sight as well as showcasing the history of sight over the last 800 years and highlighting a growing global vision crisis.

Most PBS affiliates nationwide, are broadcasting the documentary throughout the fall and into spring, 2017 with more than 30 public TV stations, including New York, Chicago, Tampa, Phoenix, Las Vegas, San Francisco, Oregon, Denver and Dallas, debuting it on or around October 13. Locally, KVCR-TV in San Bernardino will air the program on October 26 and PBS SoCal (KOCE-TV) in Los Angeles will premiere the film in spring, 2017. The filmmakers have also secured international broadcasting partners in Canada, Europe and Asia.

Filmmakers chose only certain expert interviews for the final documentary focusing on those who had both a national and international expertise. Dr. Varma, who in addition to serving as director of USC Roski Eye Institute is also interim dean of Keck School of Medicine of USC, was interviewed for his research and expertise on the growing worldwide epidemic of childhood myopia. Dr. Humayun, who is co-director of USC Roski Eye Institute and director of the [USC Institute for Biomedical Therapeutics](#), was featured for his co-creation of the Argus II retinal prostheses system that is helping to restore some vision to those with retinitis pigmentosa (RP). His Argus creation contributed to Humayun being honored by President Obama with the [National Medal of Technology and Innovation](#) earlier this year.

“Dr. Humayun and Dr. Varma are some of the best of the best in the field of research ophthalmology so it's very important to include them in the film,” said Koenig.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has acknowledged that reducing visual impairment is a global public health problem which is why it is one of WHO’s main goals in its Global Action Plan 2014-2019 *Universal Eye Health*.

“It’s exciting to be included in such a groundbreaking documentary film on vision and to represent USC, the USC Roski Eye Institute and our world-class vision research,” said Varma. As one of the committee members who wrote the recently published report issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), [Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow](#), Varma added, “Both in the U.S. and internationally we have a societal obligation to preserve vision health and to reduce blindness and

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USC Roski Eye Institute Experts Featured in PBS Documentary SIGHT

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visual impairment - eye health has to be at the top of our national policy agenda and films like *SIGHT* help us tell the story about this global public health issue.”

“The passion of Kris and his expert filmmaking on this project is obvious when you see it,” says Humayun who was also recently interviewed for a *National Geographic* cover story on [“The End of Blindness.”](#) “It was an honor to be included in this film and to showcase how we can create a worldwide movement to preserve sight and prevent blindness.”

Underwritten by Zeiss, VSP Global, The Vision Council, OneSight, Essilor, Luxottica, Alcon and Brien Holden Vision Institute with presenting station SOPTV, the PBS affiliate in Southern Oregon, *SIGHT* is a multimedia program. In addition to the film, there is a companion app, [Second Screen](#), that provides more content and stories that did not make it into the final 60-minute film. There is also a *SIGHT* [eBook/iBook](#) available on iTunes and Google Play.

Terry Byland, a patient at the USC Roski Eye Institute and the only person in the world to have the Argus implant in *both eyes*, was interviewed along with his wife Sue by the filmmakers for additional educational content that will be seen on the *SIGHT* social media channels such as Facebook. Humayun, Byland’s surgeon, says Byland played a crucial role in the ongoing research and evolution of the Argus system as the only person who can provide a firsthand account of the difference in the original and the FDA-approved versions of the implant.

[Watch Terry and Sue Byland’s story](#)

Byland had his first implant during Humayun’s Argus clinical trial in 2004 and was implanted in 2015 in his second eye with the FDA-approved Argus, which has three times the electrodes of the original version for more visual clarity. The Byland’s story and Sue’s journey as Terry’s caregiver also appears in an online article on [PBS Next Avenue](#).

SIGHT is also the first film to be broadcast with a color correction that is adapted for the vision of people with color blindness using Enchroma glasses and technology. Similar to Closed Captioning (CC) for the hearing impaired, and Video Description (VD) for low vision and the blind, the color blind accessible correction (CA) helps those with limited red-green color sensitivity better see differences between colors they normally struggle to distinguish.

“Vision is important to every human being on the planet,” said Koenig. “Once we realized that there wasn’t a film on the various vision crises around the world and how vision affects everyone as we age, it became clear that a film needed to be made.”

USC Roski Eye Institute, in partnership with the local PBS SoCal station (KOCE-TV), will be sponsoring a special event to celebrate the premiere of *SIGHT* in Los Angeles when the PBS affiliate airs the program in spring 2017.

To learn more about USC Roski Eye Institute, visit: [usceye.org](#).

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