

Chennai's Sankara Nethralaya to launch training academy

BY A STAFF WRITER

Sankara Nethralaya, a leading eye care hospital in Chennai, is setting up a new academy to offer fellowship and training programs for ophthalmologists, optometrists, nurses and administration personnel.

The Sankara Nethralaya Academy will serve as a platform for creating, processing and disseminating knowledge related to eye care, ophthalmic research and hospital administration, a press release said.

Classes begin in April. On the anvil are certificate programs in

orthoptics, contact lens, hospital management, ophthalmic theater assistance, as well as fellowship programs in vision therapy and ophthalmology, the press release said.

The programs, which range from five weeks to a year, will be a combination of online modules, theory and practical sessions and the faculty will include the institute's leading ophthalmologists.

According to Dr. S.S. Badrinath, the founder of Sankara Nethralaya, the programs will teach and train personnel working in eye hospitals, the "A to Z on how to perform, conduct in a service-ori-

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ented organization and deliver care in a professional manner."

So far, Sankara Nethralaya has been offering a wide range of academic and training programs in ophthalmology, optometry, nursing and medical lab technology.

The eye care scenario in

India is grim, according to Sankara Nethralaya.

"Every third blind person in the world is an Indian; if left untreated, the number of blind in India is expected to rise to 18 million by 2020," the institute estimates.

Since the hospital's founding in 1978, Badrinath has encouraged doctors to pursue other specialties. Subsequently, a team of doctors was sent to the United States and Europe to be trained in various ophthalmic specialties. On their return to India, those doctors helped recruit and train other physicians, the press release said.

Also in 1978, the Medical

Research Foundation of which Sankara Nethralaya is a unit, setup the C.U. Shah Ophthalmic Postgraduate Training Center to offer fellowship and training programs in vitreo-retinal surgery and general ophthalmology.

The institute also offers a two-year diploma course in ophthalmology and a three-year graduate training program in ophthalmology.

It also set up the Elite School of Optometry in 1985, offering a four-year bachelors degree in optometry as part of a program akin to that at the University of California at Berkeley.