

## NorthShore Ophthalmologists Bring Modern Techniques and Healing to Vietnam

**To aid a country that has one of the highest rates of blindness in Southeast Asia, Marian Macsai, M.D., head of NorthShore University HealthSystem's (NorthShore's) Division of Ophthalmology, and several colleagues recently traveled to Vietnam to teach physicians the latest eye surgery techniques.**

Ron May, M.D., a NorthShore-affiliated physician and project director for the Illinois Association of Ophthalmology (IAO), invited Dr. Macsai to participate. "I didn't know what to expect," said Dr. Macsai, who took part in the IAO's ongoing humanitarian project. "It was a wonderful experience to share our knowledge and expertise in a country that has a great need."

The IAO's "Project Vietnam" is an effort to help reduce the incidence of blindness in that country and developed because of the passion of ophthalmologist Dr. May. NorthShore-affiliated physician Maria Rosselson, M.D., has also participated in the project, which is supported by the nonprofit Global Community Services Foundation and Alcon. Additionally, the IAO is building an eye clinic and rehabilitation facility in the Vietnamese town of Vinh Linh.



*NorthShore ophthalmologists Dr. Ronald May (second from left) and Dr. Marian Macsai (center, seated) traveled to Vietnam to care for patients, working in conjunction with local doctors and teaching them newer techniques. Here Dr. Macsai is examining the eyes of a patient on the day before her surgery.*

As part of "Project Vietnam," Dr. Macsai and Dr. May taught 16 ophthalmologists from rural provinces a weeklong phacoemulsification course at the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology in Hanoi. Phacoemulsification is an advanced form of cataract surgery commonly practiced in the United States. In Vietnam, ophthalmologists still use techniques that were considered leading edge here during the 1980s, according to Dr. Macsai.

On the second week of the trip, Dr. Macsai and Dr. May traveled to Dong Ha in

Quang Tri province. Collaborating with local ophthalmologists, they performed cataract surgeries for local residents with mature cataracts.

"After surgery, many patients were able to recognize family members that they had not been able to see clearly for quite some time," Dr. Macsai said. "It was extremely gratifying." ■