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Prevent Blindness America Announces Vision and Eye Health Complement to National Prevention Strategy

CHICAGO (Nov. 7, 2011) – As the incidence of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, reach epidemic levels, prevention becomes an increasingly critical component of healthcare policy in the United States. To emphasize the role of disease prevention in the national effort to contain spiraling medical costs and improve the quality of life for all Americans, the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council has developed the “[National Prevention Strategy.](#)” This document outlines the role that increasing prevalence of chronic conditions, poor health habits, and decline in mental and emotional well-being play in the increasing healthcare costs in the United States and offers a roadmap to improving healthcare outcomes through lifestyle intervention and disease prevention.

In response to this initiative, Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s oldest eye health and safety non-profit organization, has developed “[Vision Preservation and the National Prevention Strategy: A Call to Action.](#)” This comprehensive plan emphasizes how the effects of vision impairment cut across chronic co-morbid conditions, injuries, and quality of life. It further demonstrates the importance of prevention services and programs in promoting vision and eye health.

“In 1908, Prevent Blindness America began as a public health agency dedicated to eliminating preventable blindness in newborns. Through effective advocacy efforts and partnerships with key influencers in government, science, academic, and public health arenas, we work to ensure that sight-saving efforts continue to this day,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “‘Vision Preservation and the National Prevention Strategy’ outlines important efforts that can be taken to protect the vision of all Americans today and for years to come.”

The plan provides addendums to the four *Strategic Directions* promoted by the National Prevention Council. Prevent Blindness America is encouraging organizations to take on some of these recommendations to lead to a healthier country that embraces prevention and promotes eye health. Examples include:

1. Healthy and Safe Community Environments

Provide and promote programs that address falls prevention; utilize vision and health data within states; increase the numbers of eye healthcare providers and trained vision screeners; promote partnerships with state departments of

education, early learning centers, and schools to incorporate eye health and safety education into curriculums.

2. Clinical and Community Preventive Services

Work with organizations and healthcare systems that target high-risk populations; increase awareness and expansion of vision insurance and wellness benefits; support the role of vision screenings in healthcare offices and community/school-based health centers.

3. Empowered People

Support people in making healthier choices through effective education materials that address cultural competency and health literacy; engage in social media practices, peer education, and at-risk education; encourage public policy advocacy.

4. Elimination of Health Disparities

Identify and address key areas for vision and wellness programming; engage community health centers to expand or create vision programs and promote access to care.

Added Parry, “The ultimate goal of the ‘Vision Preservation and the National Prevention Strategy’ from Prevent Blindness America is to educate the public on the critical need for, and the benefits of, addressing vision and eye health in the overall public health discussion. Toward that end, we hope to bring together experts and policymakers from state departments of health, aging and education groups, patient advocacy groups, the healthcare community and more to pursue concrete steps toward improving the lives of all Americans through eye disease prevention services.”

The complete “Vision Preservation and the National Prevention Strategy: A Call to Action” report can be found at www.preventblindness.org or by calling 1-800-331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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