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Prevent Blindness America Supports National Falls Prevention Awareness Day on September 22

- Millions with Refractive Error, Eye Disease at Increased Risk for Falls -

CHICAGO (Sept. 18, 2013) – The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov) states that one out of three people ages 65 and older falls each year. And, according to the [National Council on Aging](http://www.nationalcouncilonaging.org), every 15 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall-related injury. People who fall are 2 to 3 times more likely to fall again. By the year 2020, direct and indirect costs related to injuries from falls are expected to reach \$54.9 billion.

Unfortunately, those with impaired vision are more likely to experience falls and injuries. Vision impairment can affect balance. It also increases the risk of tripping or misjudging steps, stairs or curbs. Today, based on data from the 2012 "[Vision Problems in the U.S.](http://www.cdc.gov)" study, more than 48 million Americans over the age of 40 have refractive error, in addition to the more than 36 million with cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration.

Prevent Blindness America joins with more than 70 national organizations of the Falls Free™ Coalition to declare Sept. 22, 2013, the first day of autumn, as [National Falls Prevention Awareness Day](http://www.preventblindness.org). This year's theme, "Preventing Falls—One Step at a Time," is aimed at educating the public on the risk factors for falls and prevention strategies.

The [CDC](http://www.cdc.gov) also states that most falls are caused by a combination of multiple risk factors. Some risk factors can be modifiable including:

- Poor vision
- Lower body weakness
- Difficulties with gait and balance
- Use of psychoactive medications
- Postural dizziness
- Problems with feet and/or shoes

- Home hazards

“The overall impact of a fall on an older person can be devastating, beyond just the initial injury. The effects on the patient, caregivers and family can be emotionally and financially enormous,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “We hope that by alerting the public to the dangers of falls, as well as educating them on ways to avoid them, we can help prevent unnecessary injuries. And, maintaining healthy vision is one way to accomplish this!”

For more information about National Falls Prevention Awareness Day or general eye health, please contact Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or preventblindness.org.

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 and regional offices, 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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