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**National Expert Panel Provides Recommendations for
Vision Health Systems for Preschool Age Children**

***- Expert Panel to the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at
Prevent Blindness Develops Specific Guidelines and Strategies to Help Ensure
Healthy Sight -***

CHICAGO (Dec. 15, 2014) – To address the need of an effective approach in helping to ensure the vision health of children across the country, the [National Expert Panel \(NEP\)](#) of the [National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health \(NCCVEH\) at Prevent Blindness](#) has published recommendations providing an evidence-based approach to vision screening in children ages 3 through 5, as well as system-based public health strategies to ensure improved surveillance and program accountability as it relates to children's vision in the United States. The recommendations are published in the January 2015 issue of [Optometry and Vision Science](#), and are further discussed on this special NCCVEH-hosted [Vision Health Systems for Preschool Age-Children website](#).

In 2009, Prevent Blindness was awarded a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to establish the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health. The mission of the Center is to develop a coordinated public health infrastructure to promote and ensure a comprehensive, multi-tiered continuum of vision care for young children. The NCCVEH convened the NEP, a panel of leading professionals in ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics, public health, and related fields, to review the current scientific literature, explore best practices, and gain consensus on the best approach to children's vision and eye health.

"A vision screening is a great first step to saving vision and putting our kids on a path of healthy development," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "But that is only one step in the continuum of vision health for children. There also must

be mechanisms in place to make sure that screenings are administered effectively and that the children are receiving follow-up care. By putting forth these recommendations, the National Expert Panel is providing an excellent approach to helping our kids achieve a lifetime of healthy vision while improving public health surveillance and program impacts.”

The NEP has written three papers targeting children aged 36 to less than 72 months entitled:

- 1) [Vision Screening for Children 36 to <72 Months: Recommended Practices](#)
- 2) [Vision and Eye Health in Children 36 to <72 Months: Proposed Data System](#)
- 3) [Vision and Eye Health in Children 36 to <72 Months: Proposed Data Definitions](#)

Added Parry, “We want to thank all of the members of our Expert Panel as well as those who have supported this monumental effort along the way. By engaging leaders from various medical, scientific, and public health fields, we were able to combine forces to create a strategy that addresses many of the vision and eye care needs for our children.”

For a copy of the recommendations from the National Expert Panel of the National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health, additional information on general children’s eye health, the NCCVEH or Prevent Blindness, please visit visionsystems.preventblindness.org or call (800)-331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness 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 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 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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