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Healthy Lifestyle Changes can Help Protect Vision from Age-related Macular Degeneration

CHICAGO (Jan. 31, 2013) – More than 2 million Americans, ages 50 and over, have AMD, a 25 percent increase from the last decade, according to the [2012 Vision Problems in the U.S.](#) report from Prevent Blindness America. And, AMD is the leading cause of vision loss and blindness for those ages 65 and older.

Prevent Blindness America has declared February as Age-related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month, Prevent Blindness America offers a dedicated online resource for patients and caretakers to learn more about the disease. The website, preventblindness.org/amd, provides a variety of tools and information on everything from risk factors, treatment options, and even a downloadable Amsler Grid, (a tool that can help identify vision abnormalities linked to AMD).

Those with AMD may experience the following symptoms:

- Straight lines, such as a flag pole or streetlight, may appear wavy
- A dark or empty spot may block the center of vision
- Written words or type may appear blurry

There are two forms of AMD: "dry" and "wet." Dry AMD is the most common form of the disease. It involves the presence of drusen – fatty deposits that form under the light-sensing cells in the retina. Vision loss in dry AMD usually progresses slowly. Wet AMD is less common, but more rapidly threatening to vision. Wet AMD causes tiny blood vessels under the retina to leak or break open. This distorts vision and causes scar tissue to form. Although there are treatments for AMD, there is no cure.

“Fortunately, steps we can take today to maintain our overall health can directly benefit the eyes,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “We encourage all adults to make an appointment with their eye doctor today to develop a plan to protect vision for a lifetime.”

To maintain healthy eyes and lower the risk of eye disease, Prevent Blindness America recommends that everyone:

- Visit an eye doctor regularly
- Stop smoking
- Eat healthy foods, including foods rich in certain antioxidants
- Stay active
- Control the blood pressure

- Protect the eyes from the sun by wearing UV-blocking sunglasses and a brimmed hat

For more information on AMD and other eye disease, please contact Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org/amd.

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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