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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Women at Higher-Risk than Men for Sight-Threatening Eye Diseases
and Conditions**

***-Women Must Make Eye Health a Priority Today
in Order to Preserve Vision for the Future-***

CHICAGO (March 26, 2013) – Among the many differences between men and women’s health, women are more susceptible to vision impairment. Of the 4.1 million Americans age 40 and older who are visually impaired or blind, 2.6 million are women. And, according to a recent [study by Prevent Blindness America](#), more women than men have age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, the four leading eye diseases in the country.

According to the National Eye Institute, the causes are primarily due to longevity as well as hormonal factors. Prevent Blindness America has designated April as Women’s Eye Health and Safety Month in an effort to educate women about the steps they can take today to help preserve vision in the future.

“The first thing every woman should do, especially those ages 40 and older, is get a dilated eye exam,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “Through early detection and treatment, vision loss can be lessened.”

Prevent Blindness America also recommends a healthy diet, quitting smoking, taking supplements (as approved by a medical professional), consistently wearing UV-blocking sunglasses with a brimmed hat outdoors and learning of any family history of eye disease.

If anyone is experiencing any of the following symptoms, an appointment with an eyecare professional should be made immediately:

- Unusual trouble adjusting to dark rooms;
- Difficulty focusing on near or distant objects;

- Squinting or blinking due to unusual sensitivity to light or glare;
- Change in color of iris;
- Red-rimmed, encrusted or swollen lids;
- Recurrent pain in or around eyes;
- Double vision;
- Dark spot at the center of viewing;
- Lines and edges appear distorted or wavy;
- Excess tearing or "watery eyes";
- Dry eyes with itching or burning; and
- Seeing spots, ghost-like images.

For more information on women's eye health, including fact sheets on eye diseases, pregnancy and vision, and the safe use of cosmetics, please visit www.preventblindness.org or call 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 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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