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**Prevent Blindness America Announces Recipient of
Tenth Annual Investigator Award**

- Research Grant Awarded to Dr. Lyne Racette, Indiana University -

CHICAGO (June 4, 2013) – Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, announced today the recipient of its 2013 Investigator Award. This year’s selected recipient is Lyne Racette, PhD, assistant professor at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Eye Institute, Department of Ophthalmology at Indiana University in Indianapolis, Ind.

The 2013 Investigator Award has been presented for the study, “The effectiveness of motivational interviewing to improve adherence to glaucoma treatment in patients of African descent.”

The Prevent Blindness America Investigator Awards are research grants presented annually to scientifically-based studies that seek to end unnecessary vision loss. To date, Prevent Blindness America has awarded more than \$1 million to eye and vision research projects. A panel of experts coordinated by the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) made the final selection.

“Once vision is lost to glaucoma, it cannot be restored,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “It is our hope that through our support of Dr. Racette’s important study, that we can help to minimize the risk of blindness from this disease by working with patients to better understand their needs and help encourage compliance to prevent the needless loss of sight.”

Glaucoma is an eye disease that causes a gradual degeneration of cells that make up the optic nerve, which carries visual information from the eye to the brain. As the nerve cells die, vision is slowly lost, usually beginning peripherally. Many cases of glaucoma can be controlled and vision loss slowed or halted by treatment. However, those of African descent are at a much higher risk for developing the disease, about six times as likely, and are also at higher risk to become blind from it.

According to Dr. Racette, this high-risk population is also less likely to adhere to continued medical treatment for the disease. The purpose of the study is to investigate whether motivational interviewing can be used as an effective approach to improve adherence to treatment. Motivational interviewing attempts to elicit from each patient the strategy that is most likely to ensure that they will adhere to their treatment regimen.

“The support of Prevent Blindness America provides an outstanding opportunity to improve adherence to treatment in a high-risk population, thus preserving sight and reducing a significant health disparity,” said Dr. Racette. “I also want to give special thanks to Silvia Bigatti, PhD, for her contribution to this promising study.”

For more information on the Prevent Blindness America Investigator Awards, or for free information on glaucoma, please call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org/glaucoma.

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.