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Women at Higher Risk than Men for Most Eye Diseases, Yet One in Four Has Not Had an Eye Exam in Last Two Years

-Survey Reveals Cost as Major Reason Why Women Forego Exams, Even For Those with Vision Insurance-

CHICAGO (March 24, 2015) – According to the recent Prevent Blindness study, [The Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems](#), women make up the majority of the 4.4 million Americans age 40 and older who are visually impaired or blind. More women than men have age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, and glaucoma. These numbers will only continue to increase in the years to come.

Although there are no cures for these diseases, many of the effects may be lessened through early detection and treatment. A recent online survey on behalf of Prevent Blindness found, however, that one in four women had not received an eye exam in the past two years. Cost was cited as the number one reason for both those who did and did not have vision insurance. Other reasons cited were transportation issues and simply being “too busy” to make an appointment.

The recent survey results are alarming combined with the results from the Prevent Blindness survey conducted last year by Harris Poll which found that:

- Less than 10 percent of American women realize that women are at a greater risk of suffering permanent vision loss than men.
- 86 percent incorrectly believe that men and women are at equal risk
- Five percent believe that men are at greater risk

Prevent Blindness 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 group also created the program, [See Jane See: Women’s Healthy Eyes Now](#), to provide free education and resources on everything from eye disease to cosmetic safety

to vision changes during pregnancy. Valuable information and new data on a range of topics related to women's vision health at every life stage can be found at SeeJaneSee.org. In addition, the site also features a section written by leading experts on topics from everything from the importance of eye exams to effects of smoking on vision.

"Healthy vision is something we often take for granted until it starts to slip away," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "We want to encourage women to put themselves on a path toward a lifetime of healthy vision by making an appointment for a dilated eye exam today!"

Prevent Blindness also recommends:

- quitting smoking
- taking supplements (as approved by a medical professional)
- learning of any family history of eye disease
- expectant mothers should be aware of possible vision changes during pregnancy
- all women who are pregnant or who are planning to become pregnant and have been diagnosed with diabetes should get a full, dilated eye exam
- wear UV-blocking sunglasses and a brimmed hat outdoors
- use cosmetics safely
- use contact lenses safely

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