

Prevent Blindness recommends a funding level of **\$10 million to the Vision and Eye Health** program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Fiscal Year 2025:

The CDC's [Vision and Eye Health](#) program promotes vision health and quality of life for all populations, throughout all life stages, by preventing and controlling eye disease, eye injury, and vision loss resulting in disability. The Vision Health Initiative (VHI) uses surveillance to assess the burden of vision impairment and blindness, helps states develop capacity to implement state-based surveillance systems, and evaluates measurable impacts to expand surveillance activities, programs and interventions nationwide to improve the care for people with or at risk for vision loss.

Vision Loss and Eye Disease Surveillance

The [Vision and Eye Health Surveillance System](#) (VEHSS) at the CDC's [Vision Health Initiative](#) is the nation's leading comprehensive source of vision loss and eye disease data. VEHSS incorporates data sources like medical claims and self-reported survey instruments to

Vision loss and eye disease contribute to or are complicated by other costly chronic diseases including: [diabetes](#), [heart disease and stroke](#), [depression and anxiety](#), and [cognitive decline](#).

Unaddressed vision problems can lead to: [lack of mobility](#), [psychological distress](#) and [mental health problems](#), [reduced access to health care](#), and increase the [need for caregiving](#) or [long-term care](#).

provide an understanding of the existing scope of vision loss, eye disease, eye disorders, and eye care services at the national, state, and county levels and by communities, populations, and age. However, VEHSS only provides an approximation of visual impairment, eye disease, severe vision loss, or blindness because it only captures data from those ***who already know that they have a vision disorder*** and have already sought eye care services. VEHSS needs additional funding to determine risk prevalence of vision loss and eye disease in order to strengthen partnerships that emphasize early detection and prevention of avoidable vision loss and eye disease.

State and Community Partnerships

Additionally, [states and communities can form partnerships](#) that emphasize early detection and intervention, identify the biggest challenges to accessing eye care—whether it is cost of care, lack of

eye care providers, inaccessible transportation, or unawareness of personal risk— and develop strategies that reflect the needs of their communities. For example, the CDC's [Glaucoma Detection Program](#) places glaucoma detection practices into **primary care settings** and **community health centers**, **identifies barriers to preventing vision loss** (such as poverty, uninsurance or underinsurance, or reduced access to eye care), and **implements community-based screenings** using patient care navigators.

With \$10 million in Fiscal Year 2025, the CDC's Vision and Eye Health program will be able to:

- Improve quality and range of data on both existence and risk of vision loss and eye disease in the United States through use of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES),
- Measure rates of vision loss and eye disease as well as risk for vision loss and eye disease in populations within ages 6 to 18 years old (for which there is no existing surveillance mechanism),
- Improve state and community partnerships to integrate vision and eye health into other ongoing public health initiatives that reflect community need.

Vision loss cost the United States **\$188 billion in 2023** and yet, our federal government (through the CDC) currently allocates **just \$6.5 million** toward surveillance, detection, and prevention of vision problems.

Put another way, **for every \$28,923** that treating and managing vision problems costs our country, **only a single dollar** is allocated toward preventing them in the first place.