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## **New Report from Prevent Blindness America Shows Sharp Increase in Eye Disease Prevalence in Texas**

### **- Vision Problems in the U.S. Data Includes a 32 Percent Spike in Glaucoma Over Last Decade -**

**Houston, TX (June 20, 2012)** – More adult Americans are facing the reality of eye disease than ever before. According to the 2012 update of the [“Vision Problems in the U.S.”](#) report, a study released today by Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, the number of those ages 40 and older with vision impairment and blindness has increased 23 percent since the year 2000. The study, conducted by researchers from Johns Hopkins University, provides prevalence rates and estimates cases of age-related eye conditions. A full version of the study is available at [preventblindness.org/visionproblems](http://preventblindness.org/visionproblems).

In addition, a preliminary update to the 2007 Prevent Blindness America “Economic Impact of Vision Problems” report shows a \$1 billion increase in costs of excess medical care expenditures, informal care and health-related quality of life related to visual impairment and blindness. Further cost information is being developed and a full updated report on the economic impact of vision problems will be available at a later date.

Overviews of both reports were presented at the Prevent Blindness America “Focus on Eye Health Summit” on June 20<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. The Summit featured a number of other key public health updates and presentations from national leaders, including reports on eye health surveillance efforts and NEI planning activities for vision research.

Statistics from the 2012 Vision Problems in the U.S. report on the four most common eye diseases highlight alarming increases in Texas since the 2000 report was issued, including:

- 118,169 people age 50 and older have late **AMD (age-related macular degeneration), a 27 percent increase**
- 1,589,280 million people age 40 and older have **cataracts, a 30 percent increase**
- 184,720 people age 40 and older have open-angle **glaucoma, a 32 percent increase**
- 607,054 people ages 40 and older have **diabetic retinopathy**

“It’s no surprise that the numbers of those affected by eye disease are continuing to climb, especially due to the aging Baby Boomer population,” said Debbie Goss, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Texas.

Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults 20-74 years of age. According to the Centers for Disease Control, diabetes affects 25.8 million people in the United States. Although there is no cure for diabetic eye disease, annual eye exams for diabetes patients are essential to help slow the progression of the disease.

All data from the Vision Problems in the U.S. report can now be obtained through a new searchable database housed on the Prevent Blindness America website at [preventblindness.org/visionproblems](http://preventblindness.org/visionproblems). This unique tool enables users to research a wide range of information including eye disease and condition numbers broken down by state, age, sex, and race, and provides comparisons across disease conditions.

Added Goss, “It is our hope that this new data will provide those in the health community, the public and our government’s leaders with the vital information they need to address these troubling numbers through programs, research and funding.”

For more information about the 2012 Vision Problems in the U.S. report, glaucoma, diabetes and other eye diseases, please call Prevent Blindness Texas at 1-888-98-SIGHT or visit [www.preventblindnesstexas.org](http://www.preventblindnesstexas.org).

*For media: Downloadable graphs and other resources can be found under the News & Resources tab at [preventblindness.org/visionproblems](http://preventblindness.org/visionproblems)*

### **About Prevent Blindness Texas**

Founded in 1956, Prevent Blindness is the state’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 Texas touches the lives of thousands of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the Texas public. Through a network of regional offices and volunteers, we are committed to eliminating preventable blindness in Texas. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-888-98-SIGHT or visit us on the Web at [www.preventblindnesstexas.org](http://www.preventblindnesstexas.org) or <http://www.facebook.com/preventblindnesstexas>.

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