

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information:**  
Prevent Blindness Texas  
Monica Saenz Guerrero  
Phone: (713) 526-2559, Ext. 106  
msaenz@preventblindnesstexas.org

## **Prevent Blindness Texas Declares February as AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month**

**(February 1, 2017)** – Today, more than 2 million Americans ages 50 and over have age-related macular degeneration (AMD), according to the [Prevent Blindness](#) report, “[Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems.](#)”

And, the increase of the population aged 80 and older will lead to rapid growth in the AMD population over the next 20 years, reaching 3.4 million in 2032 and 4.4 million by 2050.

Prevent Blindness Texas has declared February as Age-related Macular Degeneration/Low Vision Awareness Month. AMD is a leading cause of vision loss for Americans age 50 and older. It affects central vision, where sharpest vision occurs. Almost 3 million Americans have low vision, according to the [National Eye Institute](#).

According to the recent National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division (NASEM) consensus study, “[Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow.](#)” increasing age, white race, and female gender are associated with a higher risk of AMD. The report also found that a number of environmental, behavioral, genetic, and other physical conditions have been associated with the risk of AMD, including smoking, obesity and genetics.

There may be no symptoms until the disease progresses or affects both eyes. Vision changes due to AMD may include:

- Difficulty seeing in the center of vision
- Trouble seeing in dim light
- Straight lines (such as a flag pole) start to appear wavy, blurry or missing
- Fading and/or changes in the appearance of colors

Prevent Blindness Texas offers educational materials at no cost through its dedicated web pages and its toll-free number. Resources include:

**Prevent Blindness AMD Learning Center-** The AMD Learning Center, found at [preventblindness.org/amd](http://preventblindness.org/amd), provides a variety of educational tools including AMD risk factors, treatment options, an Adult Vision Risk Assessment tool, fact sheets and more.

**Living Well with Low Vision-** This growing online resource, [lowvision.preventblindness.org](http://lowvision.preventblindness.org), offers information ranging from an extensive list of searchable, local low vision resource directories, to an informative blog with news for

people living with age-related eye disease and significant visual impairment, and their caregivers, authored by patient advocate and low vision educator Dan Roberts, M.M.E.

“By detecting AMD and treating it early, vision loss can be significantly lessened,” said **Debbie Goss, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness**. “We urge everyone to make an appointment for a dilated eye exam today.”

For more information on AMD, low vision and other eye disease, please contact Prevent Blindness at 1-888-98-SIGHT or visit [www.preventblindnesstexas.org](http://www.preventblindnesstexas.org).

### **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 [preventblindnesstexas.org](http://preventblindnesstexas.org) or [www.facebook.com/preventblindnesstexas](http://www.facebook.com/preventblindnesstexas) or [www.twitter.com/pbtexas](http://www.twitter.com/pbtexas).

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