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A Life Course of Healthy Vision:
A Critical Priority for the 21st Century
“NO OTHER FORCE IS LIKELY TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC HEALTH, PUBLIC FINANCES, AND POLICYMAKING AS THE IRREVERSIBLE RATE AT WHICH THE WORLD’S POPULATION IS AGING.”

S&P Global
GLOBAL POPULATION OVER 60:

1,000,000,000

Doubling by Mid-Century
Profoundly Reframing Our 21st Century

Population Aging Megatrend

- Healthy Aging and Functional Ability
- Conditions of Aging
- Public Policy Shifts
- Living and Working Differently
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A Crossroads for Vision Health

Visual impairment and vision loss are:

- Widespread
- Largely preventable
- Undertreated
- Predicted to skyrocket

Most people value sight over their other senses yet this fails to translate into action on an individual or a system level.

Reframing vision loss in older adults
In 2017, **253 million individuals worldwide** were considered **visually impaired**.

81% of those were **age 50 or older**.
80% of visual impairment and vision loss is avoidable.
Undertreated

In the UK, there are only 0.38 ophthalmologists per 10,000 inhabitants.

Americans rank losing their sight among their biggest health fears, but 86% don't visit an eye doctor regularly.

Nearly 40% of AMD patients in Germany and 60% in the U.S. drop out of treatment after 2 years.

In the US, 44% of older adults do not believe they even need eye care.
A CROSSROADS FOR VISION HEALTH

Predicted to Skyrocket

With 1 billion over 60 and 2 billion by midcentury, aging will dramatically increase the number of people living with visual impairment.

Visual Impairment:
- 2015: 36M
- 2050: 587.6M

Vision Loss:
- 2015: 114.6M
- 2050: 600M

Focus on Eye Health
National Summit
July 17, 2019 | National Press Club | Washington D.C.
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Costs of Poor Eye Health

$3 trillion estimated direct healthcare costs

Indirect costs of visual impairment are projected to rise from $652 billion in 2010 to $760 billion by 2020

$168 billion in lost productivity due to global vision loss per year

$246 billion estimated informal care costs due to visual impairment per year
Vision Loss and Impairment Negatively Impact Quality of Life

- 9.5X greater risk of Alzheimer’s disease
- 2.4X greater risk of falls
- 200% increase in depression
CAREGIVER INVESTMENT

25% OF CAREGIVERS MISS WORK TO SUPPORT EYE TREATMENTS

$47K PER YEAR SPENT ON CARING FOR THOSE WITH VISION LOSS
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Barriers to a Priority For Eye Health

**Ageism**
- The myth that vision loss is a normal part of aging leads to decreased care

**Health System**
- Segregated care results in barriers to prevention and early intervention

**Treatment**
- Treatment for eye disorders is resource-intensive, which disincentivizes care

**Capacity**
- A shortage of specialists and an overburdened workload leads to low access

**Policy**
- Policies prevent easy access
  - In the US vision loss care is not reimbursed along with chronic diseases
  - “Step therapy” in the US forces patients to fail on less expensive drugs before accessing preferred drugs
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Calls to Action

- Increase **accessibly and capacity of care**
- Develop **funding and reimbursement mechanisms** that incentivize access to care and person-centered treatment
- Invest in **research** to improve treatment and community-level public health interventions
- Launch an **education campaign** to change the narrative and increase literacy around eye health
- Cultivate a **workplace** that supports vision health and adopts age-friendly principles
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