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**Prevent Blindness America Supports National Falls Prevention
Awareness Day on September 23**

***- Falls Are the Leading Cause of both Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries for Those
Age 65 and older -***

CHICAGO (Sept. 13, 2011) – More than one-third of people age 65 and older fall each year, and those who fall once are two to three times more likely to fall again, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These falls can result in serious injuries and even death. In fact, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for senior citizens. Yet many falls can be prevented through a number of steps – including regular eye care.

Prevent Blindness America, the nation's oldest eye health and safety organization, joins the Falls Free™ Coalition, to declare Sept. 23, 2011 as National Falls Prevention Awareness Day in an effort to raise awareness of the dangers of falls. The Falls Free Coalition consists of 34 states and 70 national organizations, professional associations and federal agencies dedicated to reducing fall-related injury and death among older adults.

“Falls can have a traumatic and devastating impact. But the good news is that many falls are preventable!” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “By taking the necessary steps, including regular eye care, we can help to avoid these types of accidents.”

Those with vision impairment are more likely to experience falls and injuries. Visual impairment due to many factors including decreased visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, depth perception, and visual field has been found to influence the risk of falls. For example, visual impairment makes a person more likely to trip over objects they are unable to see in their walking path and uncertain about their movement because of unreliable or missing visual information about their surroundings.

In addition, the “Vision and Falls in Older People: Risk Factors and Intervention Strategies” study found that multifocal glasses can add to the risk of falls because the near-vision lenses impair distance-contrast sensitivity and depth perception in the lower visual field, reducing the ability of an older person to detect environmental hazards.

The CDC recommends the following steps that should be taken to prevent falls:

1. Begin a regular exercise program
2. Make your home safer
3. Have your healthcare provider review your medicines
4. Have your vision checked

For more information about [National Falls Prevention Awareness Day](#), general eye health or details on Medicare benefits in relation to vision care services, please contact Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America 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 America 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, divisions and chapters, Prevent Blindness America 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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