



211 West Wacker Drive  
Suite 1700  
Chicago, Illinois 60606

toll free 800.331.2020  
local 312.363.6001  
fax 312.363.6052

preventblindness.org

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information:**  
Prevent Blindness America  
Sarah Hecker  
(312) 363-6035  
shecker@preventblindness.org

## **PBA Diabetic Eye Disease Educator Program Goes Online**

**CHICAGO (April 5, 2012)** – Prevent Blindness America is pleased to announce the availability of its Diabetic Eye Disease Educator Program online. At no cost, health professionals and outreach personnel may visit [diabetes.preventblindness.org](http://diabetes.preventblindness.org) to learn about the visual system as well as the signs, symptoms and complications of the secondary vision-related diseases of diabetes – diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and glaucoma.

Today, more than 27 million adults and children in the United States have some form of diabetes. And, more than 57 million Americans have pre-diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association. In fact, diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults 20-74 years of age. According to PBA's "Economic Impact of Vision Problems: The Toll of Major Adult Eye Disorders, Visual Impairment, and Blindness on the U.S. Economy" study, diabetic retinopathy costs \$490 million annually in direct costs for outpatient, inpatient and prescription drug services.

In response to these alarming statistics, the PBA Diabetic Eye Disease Educator Program, developed with support from the Allergan Foundation and Abbott Medical Optics (AMO), was created as a self-guided web based course that equips health educators with important patient and client education messages about diabetic eye disease and strategies for maintaining healthy vision that can be delivered through health outreach programs of community health centers, health departments, medical practices, and civic and faith-based organizations to those who are diabetic as well as populations at highest risk for developing diabetes, including African-Americans, Hispanics and Latinos.

Upon successful completion of the Diabetic Eye Disease Educator Course and post-test, participants will receive a certificate and patient education materials, and will be able to begin to implement the Education Program into their facilities and programs.

"Diabetes is an enormous health crisis that our country is facing today," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. "By offering this tool to those who are on the front lines of helping the public with their health needs, we hope we can work together to educate adults on the relationship between diabetes and eye disease as well as steps that can be taken today to protect vision tomorrow."

The online course, participant guide and patient education fact sheets are available in English and Spanish. Please go to [diabetes.preventblindness.org](http://diabetes.preventblindness.org) to learn more or call PBA at (800) 331-2020.

**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](http://preventblindness.org) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](https://facebook.com/preventblindness).

###