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**More than 6,000 Americans Spent 4th of July in Emergency Rooms
Due to Fireworks-related Injuries**

***-Prevent Blindness America Urges Public to Celebrate Independence Day Safely,
Without Using Fireworks-***

CHICAGO (June 15, 2012) – While many Americans were enjoying Independence Day festivities with family and friends, in 2010 an estimated 6,300 Americans spent part of their Fourth of July holiday in the emergency room due to fireworks injuries, according to the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\) Fireworks Annual Report](#) issued in 2011.

The report also found that children under 15 years of age accounted for approximately 40 percent of the estimated injuries. And, children under the age of 5 experienced an estimated 700 injuries. For that specific age group, sparklers accounted for 43 percent of the total injuries. In fact, fireworks sometimes referred to as “safe and sane” including sparklers, fountains and other novelties, made up 2 out of 5 injuries treated in emergency rooms.

To help families enjoy a safe and happy Fourth of July, Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s oldest non-profit eye health and safety organization, is making an effort to educate the public on the potential dangers of fireworks.

Prevent Blindness America warns:

- Fireworks are extremely dangerous.
- Do not purchase, use, or store fireworks or sparklers of any type.
- Protect yourself, your family and your friends by avoiding fireworks and sparklers.
- Attend only authorized public fireworks displays conducted by licensed operators, but be aware that even professional displays can be dangerous.

Fireworks laws vary from state to state and sometimes, within different counties. Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York have banned the sale and use of all consumer fireworks. According to the [American Pyrotechnics Association](#), Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and Vermont allow only wire or wood stick sparklers and other novelty items. As of January 2012, the state of [Michigan](#) now allows the sale and purchase of all consumer fireworks. While Gov. Mark Dayton of Minnesota recently vetoed legislation to legalize aerial fireworks, including roman candles and other devices.

Prevent Blindness America continues to support the development and enforcement of bans on the importation, sale and use of all fireworks and sparklers, except for authorized public displays by competent licensed operators. The non-profit group believes it is the only effective means of eliminating the social and economic impact of fireworks-related trauma and damage.

“The Fourth of July should be a time when we come together to honor our country by celebrating our great nation safely and responsibly,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “We hope all Americans have a wonderful holiday with their loved ones, not in the emergency room.”

There were more than 1,300 reported eye injuries in 2010. In the event of any eye-related accident, Prevent Blindness America recommends the following:

If there are specks in the eye,

- DO NOT rub the eye.
- Use an eye wash or let tears wash out specks or particles;
- Lift the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid;
- If the speck doesn't wash out, keep the eye closed, bandage and see a doctor or go to the emergency room.

If the eye or eyelid is cut or punctured,

- DO NOT wash out the eye with water.
- DO NOT try to remove an object stuck in the eye.
- Cover the eye with a rigid shield without pressure. The bottom half of a paper cup may be used. Visit a doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

For more information on fireworks safety, please call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or log on to 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 and regional offices, 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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