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

**Prevent Blindness America Supports National Falls Prevention
Awareness Day on September 22**

***- People with Vision Impairments are More Than Twice as Likely to Fall
as Those Without -***

CHICAGO (Sept. 13, 2012) – Each year, one in three Americans aged 65 and over falls. Falls are the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma. In fact, every 15 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall-related injury, according to the National Council on Aging.

Prevent Blindness America, the nation's oldest eye health and safety organization, once again joins with the Falls Free™ Coalition to declare Sept. 22, 2012 [National Falls Prevention Awareness Day](#). The goal of the national campaign is to educate the public on the risks and dangers of falls and the best ways to prevent them from happening. 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.

Unfortunately, those with impaired vision are more likely to experience falls and injuries. Visual impairment, which can include decreased visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, depth perception, and/or visual field, has been found to influence the risk of falls.

One way to help reduce the risk of falls and serious injuries is to take steps to improve eye health. In fact, a recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, "[Risk of Fractures Following Cataract Surgery in Medicare Beneficiaries](#)," found compelling evidence that improved vision from cataract surgery helped to significantly decrease the number of hip fractures from people ages 80-84 by 28 percent. All patients who had severe cataracts removed had 23 percent fewer hip fractures than those who had not received the surgery.

"What is most exciting about this new research is how clearly it demonstrates the positive impact that taking care of the eyes can have on our overall health, including the prevention of serious injuries from falls," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. "By making an appointment with an eye health professional today, you can help avoid debilitating falls in the future."

To help prevent falls, [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recommends maintaining an exercise program, reviewing medications with a doctor and getting vision checked regularly. In addition, because half of all falls occur in the home, the CDC also recommends making the home safer by:

- Removing items such as papers, books, and shoes from stairs and walkways.
- Removing small rugs or using double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
- Keeping items that are used often in cabinets that are easily accessed without using a step stool or ladder.
- Installing grab bars next to the toilet and in the tub or shower. Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
- Improving the lighting in your home.
- Having handrails and lights put in on all staircases.
- Wearing shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.

For more information about National Falls Prevention Awareness Day or general eye health, 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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