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Prevent Blindness Supports National Falls Prevention Awareness Day on September 23

CHICAGO (Sept. 17, 2014) – According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), every 14 seconds an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury. The chances of falling and of being seriously injured in a fall increase with age.

Prevent Blindness, the nation's oldest non-profit eye health and safety organization, is joining the NCOA in proclaiming September 23, 2014 as [National Falls Prevention Awareness Day](#). This year's theme, *Strong Today – Falls Free[®] Tomorrow*, highlights the important roles professionals, older adults, caregivers, and family members play in raising awareness and preventing falls in the older adult population.

Those with vision impairments are at higher risk of falls and injuries. Vision impairment affects balance and also increases the likelihood of tripping or misjudging stairs, curbs or other uneven surfaces. According to recent data from "[The Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems](#)" study, there are more than 3 million Americans who are visually impaired and an additional 1.2 million who are legally blind. Those numbers are projected to increase heavily by the year 2050 when there will be an estimated 7.3 million with visual impairments and more than 3 million who are legally blind.

To assist those who have low vision today, Prevent Blindness recently launched the new program, "[Living Well with Low Vision](#)," specifically developed from the point of view of patients and patient advocates. This site, which is designed with viewing accommodations for differing levels of vision loss, provides an extensive list of searchable resource directories, including a database of 1,500 municipal paratransit services; a library of self-help guides and workbooks for people living with low vision as well as their caregivers; and an up-to-the-minute blog with news and features of interest to people living with age-related eye disease and significant visual impairment. Patient advocate and low vision educator Dan Roberts, M.M.E., serves as editor-in-chief.

"One step in avoiding falls is to get an eye exam," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "By maintaining healthy eyesight, we can potentially minimize the risks of falls and avoid unnecessary injuries."

The NCOA provides additional suggestions to avoid falls:

- A physical activity program with balance, strength training, and flexibility components.
- Consulting with a health professional about getting a fall risk assessment.
- Having medications reviewed periodically.
- Making sure the home environment is safe and supportive.
- Having an annual hearing assessment.

For more information about general eye health, The Future of Vision Study, or the Living Well with Low Vision program, please contact Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or preventblindness.org. For details about National Falls Prevention Awareness Day, contact the NCOA at (202) 479-1200 or NCOA.org/FPAD.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness 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 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, Prevent Blindness 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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