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## **Prevent Blindness Study Shows Number of Those Affected by AMD and Low Vision to Increase Substantially in Near and Distant Future**

***- Group Provides Free Resources to AMD/Low Vision Patients and their Caregivers -***

**CHICAGO (Jan. 22, 2015)** – Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) affects more than 2 million Americans ages 50 and older. And, according to the recent Prevent Blindness “[Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems](#)” report, that number is expected to jump to 3.4 million in 2032 and 4.4 million in 2050.

AMD is a disease that affects part of the back of the eye called the macula, the central part of the retina. This can cause the central vision to become blurry or wavy. It may also cause a blind spot in the center of vision.

According to the Future of Vision report, the current average age of AMD patients is 80 years old, the highest of any of the major eye diseases. As such, the increase of the population aged 80 and older will lead to rapid growth in the AMD population over the next 20 years. In addition, whites and women are at higher risk for AMD, and will continue to dominate the total affected population with AMD. Projected medical treatment costs related to AMD are currently \$4.9 billion a year, with an increase to almost \$10 billion in 2032 and \$14 billion in 2050.

By 2032, Prevent Blindness estimates that the visually impaired population aged 40 and older will increase by a staggering 65 percent to nearly 5.3 million.

Prevent Blindness, the nation’s oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, has declared February as Age-related Macular Degeneration/Low Vision Awareness Month. The primary goal is to educate not only on AMD and low vision, but also to make the public aware of the free services that the group provides.

The group hosts a dedicated website, “The AMD Learning Center,” found at [preventblindness.org/amd](http://preventblindness.org/amd), which provides a variety of educational tools including AMD risk factors, treatment options, an Adult Vision Risk Assessment tool and downloadable fact sheets.

Additional Prevent Blindness resources providing information and materials on AMD and low vision include:

**Living Well with Low Vision-** In September of 2013, Prevent Blindness launched the online resource, <http://lowvision.preventblindness.org>. The program offers those with

low vision and their caregivers a variety of tools including a self-help guide to nonvisual skills, a visual skills workbook for people with age-related macular degeneration, a guide to caring for the visually impaired, and a range of resource directories, including a searchable database of more than 1,500 paratransit services around the country.

**AMD Awareness Makes a Difference-** Through this unique program, Prevent Blindness offers a free magnetic Amsler grid- a grid of horizontal and vertical lines used to monitor a person's central vision that can help identify vision abnormalities linked to AMD. The grid may be placed on items such as a refrigerator or medicine cabinet for daily use. To request a grid with instructions for use, go to: [preventblindness.org/age-related-macular-degeneration-amd](http://preventblindness.org/age-related-macular-degeneration-amd).

Signs of AMD become more obvious the longer you have the disease. Those with AMD may notice:

- Straight lines, such as telephone poles, the sides of buildings or streetlight poles, look wavy.
- Type or text looks blurry.
- A dark or empty spot may block the center of your vision.

“The best way to protect vision from AMD is to have regular eye exams. By detecting the disease and treating it early, eye doctors have the best chance to save your sight,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “We invite those who have been diagnosed with the disease or low vision to join the community on our Living Well with Low Vision site. We can help provide you with important information you need, provide insight into challenges you may be facing, and guide you and your caregiver to the services in your area.”

For more information on AMD, low vision and other eye disease, or to request a free Amsler grid, please contact Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit [preventblindness.org/amd](http://preventblindness.org/amd).

### **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 and regional offices, 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](http://preventblindness.org) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](https://facebook.com/preventblindness).

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