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Prevent Blindness Announces Recipient of Thirteenth Annual Joanne Angle Investigator Award

**- Research Grant Awarded to Dr. Rajeev S. Ramchandran, University of Rochester
School of Medicine and Dentistry -**

CHICAGO (June 22, 2016) – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation’s oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, announced today the recipient of its 2016 Joanne Angle Investigator Award. This year’s selected recipient is Rajeev S. Ramchandran, MD, MBA, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, [University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry](#). Dr. Ramchandran directs the Flaum Eye Institute’s Population Vision Health Initiative at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

The Joanne Angle Investigator Award has been presented for the study, “Implementation Science Based Study of Teleophthalmology for Diabetic Retinopathy Surveillance.”

The Joanne Angle Investigator Award is a research grant presented annually to scientifically-based studies that seek to end unnecessary vision loss. To date, Prevent Blindness has awarded more than \$1 million to eye and vision research projects. The award was named after Joanne Angle who served with the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) for many years as well as volunteered for Prevent Blindness as part of the National Board of Directors and various committees.

According to the Prevent Blindness study, “[The Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problem](#),” there are an estimated 8.1 million Americans, ages 40 and older, with diabetic retinopathy. That number is projected to increase by 35 percent to 10.9 million by 2032, and by 63 percent to 13.2 million by 2050.

Teleophthalmology for Diabetic Retinopathy Surveillance (DRS), according to Dr. Ramchandran, is the process of remotely screening diabetic patients for retinopathy. It involves placing digital non-mydratic retinal cameras in non-ophthalmic health care settings. These cameras are linked to eye care providers via telecommunication

technology, such as the Internet, and their use has improved screening rates for diabetic retinopathy worldwide.

“Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness in working age adults in the United States, resulting in significant personal, social, and economic costs and annual dilated eye exams with treatment for vision threatening retinopathy can save vision in at least 90 percent of individuals. However, the annual rate for such exams is about 50 percent for those with insurance, and even less for the underinsured,” said Dr. Ramchandran. “With support from the Joanne Angle Investigator Award from Prevent Blindness, we seek to better understand how to best deploy this new and exciting technology in the workflow of primary care clinics. This will empower primary care to join in the fight against blindness and work to increase screening for diabetic retinopathy to save the gift of sight.”

The goal and strategy of the “Implementation Science Based Study of Teleophthalmology for Diabetic Retinopathy Surveillance” project is to:

1. Develop an effective implementation strategy tool kit
2. Refine the implementation strategy for the tool kit
3. Make the tool kit available for dissemination through the Prevent Blindness network and on a publically accessible website at the University of Rochester as a standard for teleophthalmology implementation planning and program evaluation.

“The rate of diabetic eye disease continues to soar,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “The research from Dr. Ramchandran and his team will help us address the need for programs that can help save sight from one of the leading causes of blindness.”

For more information on the Prevent Blindness 2016 Joanne Angle Investigator Awards, or for free information on diabetic eye disease, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org.

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 (800) 331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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