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Cases of Glaucoma, the “Sneak Thief of Sight,” Projected to Increase Significantly in Near Future

--Prevent Blindness Provides Free Information to the Public for January’s National Glaucoma Awareness Month--

CHICAGO (Dec. 19, 2017) – As the population of the United States ages, the number of age-related eye disease cases is projected to grow. Glaucoma, one of the most common eye diseases, currently affects nearly 3 million people ages 40 and older, according to the [Prevent Blindness](#) report, “[Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems.](#)” Additionally, the numbers are estimated to increase by nearly 50 percent to 4.3 million by 2032 and by more than 90 percent to 5.5 million by 2050.

January has been declared as National Glaucoma Awareness Month by Prevent Blindness and other leading eye health organizations, in an effort to help educate the public on the disease, including risk factors and treatment options. Prevent Blindness offers a dedicated web page providing patients and their caregivers with additional free information at <https://www.preventblindness.org/glaucoma>

Glaucoma is often referred to as the “sneak thief of sight” as vision changes tend to occur gradually, without pain. Glaucoma may develop in one or both eyes. People may experience glaucoma differently. Usually, glaucoma affects side vision (peripheral vision) first. Late in the disease, glaucoma may cause “tunnel vision.” In this condition, the person can only see straight ahead. That’s why someone with glaucoma can have good central vision. However, even central vision can be seriously damaged.

For those who have been diagnosed with glaucoma, Prevent Blindness recommends:

- Patients should remember to take notes. Write down questions in advance to make the most of eye doctor visits.
- Explain to their eye doctor how the medicines they are taking affect them.
- Make sure to tell all of your other doctors about the eye medicines and all other drugs you’re taking.
- Read more about glaucoma and how to live with it. Free resources, such as the Prevent Blindness program, “[Living Well with Low Vision](#),” provide patients with information on how to maintain their independence and quality of life. Resources are also available to caregivers through the program.

“Once vision is lost from glaucoma, it cannot be restored,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “However, vision loss can be slowed with early

diagnosis and treatment. Talk with your eye care professional today to find out if you are at risk and, if you have been diagnosed, what the right treatment options are for you.”

The American Academy of Ophthalmology’s EyeCare America program provides eye care at no out-of-pocket cost to medically underserved seniors age 65 and older, and glaucoma exams to those at increased risk. For more information, visit www.aao.org/eyecareamerica.

For more information on glaucoma, or financial assistance programs, [including Medicare](#), please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit <https://www.preventblindness.org/glaucoma>.

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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