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For more information:
Prevent Blindness Texas
Monica Guerrero
Phone: (713) 526-2559, Ext. 106
mguerrero@pbtexas.org

Prevent Blindness Texas Declares October as Contact Lens Safety Awareness Month to Help Educate Millions of Users on the Best Ways to Keep Eyes Healthy

-Non-profit Group Urges Consumers to Seek Expert Advice, Obtain a Prescription for all Contact Lenses-

TX (Sept. 30, 2019) – An estimated 45 million people in the United States wear contact lenses, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). Prevent Blindness Texas has declared October as Contact Lens Safety Awareness Month to educate the public on the best ways to care for their eyes through safe use and care of contact lenses.

The CDC also states that serious eye infections that can lead to blindness affect up to one out of every 500 contact lens users per year. Yet, between 40-90 percent of contact lens wearers do not properly follow the care instructions for their contact lenses.

Many consumers may not be aware that the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) regulates contact lenses and certain contact lens care products as medical devices. Additionally, the FDA states that contact lenses are not over-the-counter (OTC) devices, and companies that sell them as such are misbranding the device and violating Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulations by selling contact lenses without having a valid prescription.

According to a recent consumer survey from the [American Academy of Optometry](#), 11 percent of consumers have worn decorative, non-corrective contact lenses. Of those, 53 percent purchased them illegally without a prescription.

“Because contact lenses are medical devices, the first step for anyone interested in purchasing contact lenses should be making an appointment with an eyecare professional,” said Heather Patrick, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Texas. “If it’s determined that contact lenses are right for the patient, a prescription is required for purchase for all types of contact lenses, even the decorative ones.”

Any time a foreign object or material is placed in the eye, there is an increased risk of complications. All contact lens wearers should always follow an eye doctor's instructions about care and cleaning of the lenses.

Prevent Blindness strongly recommends contact lens wearers contact an eye doctor if they experience the following:

- Unexplained eye discomfort or pain
- Redness of the eye
- Watering eyes
- Vision changes

For more information on contact lens safety, Prevent Blindness Texas at www.preventblindnesstexas.org or 1-888-98-SIGHT, or the dedicated website at <http://www.preventblindness.org/wearing-contact-lenses>.

About Prevent Blindness Texas

Established in 1956 and incorporated in 1965, Prevent Blindness Texas is the state's leading eye health and safety nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. At Prevent Blindness Texas, our vision is vision – making healthy eyes a priority in Texas. We focus on improving the state's vision and eye health by enhancing community capacity through our core competencies of early detection, patient support, systems enhancement, public policy, public awareness and health education. Prevent Blindness Texas touches the lives of thousands of Texans through our sight-saving programs and services through our network of volunteers and offices located statewide. For more information, or to contribute to the sight-saving fund, call 1-888-98-SIGHT or, visit us on the Web at preventblindnesstexas.org or www.facebook.com/preventblindnesstexas or www.twitter.com/pbtexas.