

Vision and Eye Health in States and Communities

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As vision and eye health efforts at the CDC have long faced inoperably low resource levels, its work has not fully ended. Using existing data on vision impairment and eye disease, the **CDC has focused on strengthening its multiple partnerships** to increase information-sharing, expanding vision and eye health education efforts to integrate vision and eye health into general medicine through care coordination strategies, and providing technical assistance to states where possible. These efforts have set the foundation for increased state and local partnerships once the appropriate resource level is available.

Working with 3 grantee states (Alabama, Nebraska, and Ohio) beginning in March 2016 through February 2017, the CDC has been able to develop capacity-building strategies to integrate vision and eye health into state and community public health infrastructure. **These efforts have resulted in evidence-based best practices which are scalable with the proper resource levels.**

| CDC'S GOALS | CAPACITY BUILDING IN NEBRASKA, OHIO, AND ALABAMA, MARCH 2016 – FEBRUARY 2017 |
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| Characterizing the public health burden of vision loss and eye disease | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in BRFSS data analysis • Develop statewide maps illustrating prevalence of poverty, low vision, and diabetes • Include vision module into state BRFSS data collection |
| Promote prevention of vision loss and access to eye care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop infographics on risk of vision loss for public and media distribution and insurance education information for plan enrollees and Medicare beneficiaries • Leverage social media platforms and traditional media to develop public awareness campaigns • Coordinate with statewide organizations to reinforce importance of early detection and treatment |
| Implement interventions to improve eye health and/or improve quality of life for persons with vision impairment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with statewide organizations to reinforce importance of early detection and treatment • Conduct trainings of adult vision screenings • Incorporate vision into falls prevention |
| Advance vision loss and eye health as a public health priority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct stakeholder meetings and summits to discuss NASEM report recommendations • Develop plans to improve vision and eye health at the state level • Identify areas where vision and eye health can be integrated |

In 2015, the CDC established a national Vision and Eye Health Surveillance System (VEHSS), which estimates our national vision impairment and eye disease burden using existing data sets from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the American Community Survey (ACS). **However, these tools are limited due to question variation, data based on self-reported rates of severe vision loss and blindness only and not eye disease or vision impairment, and the limited scope of data available.** With the appropriate resource level and current data, the VEHSS will be a powerful tool for public health practitioners, clinical professionals, and the public to understand in detail the burden of vision impairment and eye disease.



THE VISION AND EYE HEALTH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

A national data system for vision and eye health