

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Prevent Blindness Provides Educational Resources, Materials and Support to Patients and Caregivers for January's National Glaucoma Awareness Month**

***-- Non-profit Group, Prevent Blindness, Seeks to Raise Awareness and Education of Glaucoma, A Leading Cause of Blindness that Can Affect Adults and Children -***

**CHICAGO (Dec. 21, 2021)** – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation's oldest voluntary eye health organization, is joining January's National Glaucoma Awareness Month by offering a variety of free educational and awareness-building resources to help prevent unnecessary vision loss from one of the world's leading causes of blindness.

The [National Eye Institute](#) defines glaucoma as a group of eye diseases that can cause vision loss and blindness by damaging a nerve in the back of the eye called the optic nerve. This nerve sends information from the eyes to the brain. 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.

Most glaucoma cases occur in adults, but children may also develop the eye disease. Prevent Blindness has declared 2022 as the Year of Children's Vision to raise awareness and education on the specific eye health issues that affect kids. According to the [American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus \(AAPOS\)](#), classification of glaucoma may be based on the age of onset. Congenital glaucoma is present at birth. Infantile glaucoma develops between the ages of 1-24 months and glaucoma with onset after age 3 years is called juvenile glaucoma. Primary congenital/primary infantile glaucoma occurs in the general population at a rate of approximately 1 in 10,000 births, according to the AAPOS.

Additionally, the symptoms for childhood glaucoma are different than for adults. The [Glaucoma Research Foundation](#) states that parents and caregivers should look for signs of congenital glaucoma that include excessive tearing, large eyes, cloudy corneas and hiding from bright light or squeezing of eyelids.

Children with juvenile glaucoma may demonstrate or communicate they have vision loss, problems adjusting to the dark, head or eye pain, excessive blinking or squeezing of the eyelids, and consistently red eyes.

"Glaucoma can occur in all ages and is commonly referred to as 'The Sneak Thief of Sight' because typically symptoms appear slowly over time," said glaucoma expert, Constance Okeke, MD, MSCE, Virginia Eye Consultants/CVP. "The key to preventing

significant vision loss from glaucoma is to educate ourselves on the disease, and to make sure both adults and children are diagnosed and treated early.”

As part of National Glaucoma Awareness Month, Dr. Okeke will be joining Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness, for a new episode in the [Focus on Eye Health Expert Series](#). Dr. Okeke is an Ivy League, board-certified, fellowship-trained ophthalmologist specializing in glaucoma and cataract surgery. She is a pioneer of micro-invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) techniques. Dr. Okeke has been extensively published in professional literature on glaucoma, and wrote her first book “Building Blocks of Trabectome Surgery: A Step-by-Step Approach for Patient Selection.” Her next book, “The Glaucoma Guidebook” written for glaucoma patients, will be coming out in the fall of 2022.

Prevent Blindness also offers the no-cost resource, “[The Glaucoma Community](#),” in partnership with [Responsum Health](#). To date, the Glaucoma Community has more than 1,800 members and continues to grow. This resource is accessible through a mobile app and website, and members have access to patient resources that include financial assistance programs, glaucoma support groups, a chat function, a personalized newsfeed, and informative glaucoma and eyecare content in seven different languages. The Glaucoma Community also has its own Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/glaucomacommunity>.

Program partners for The Glaucoma Community include the BrightFocus Foundation, National Medical Association (NMA) Ophthalmology Section, The Glaucoma Foundation, and the Glaucoma Research Foundation.

For more information and materials on glaucoma, including fact sheets (available in English or Spanish), and sharable infographics, visit [preventblindness.org/glaucoma](http://preventblindness.org/glaucoma). For information on additional financial assistance programs in English or Spanish, [including Medicare coverage](#), visit <https://preventblindness.org/vision-care-financial-assistance-information/>.

### **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, visit us at [preventblindness.org](http://preventblindness.org), and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

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