

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information:**

Prevent Blindness

Sarah Hecker

Phone: (312) 363-6035

[shecker@preventblindness.org](mailto:shecker@preventblindness.org)

## **Prevent Blindness Declares February as Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Low Vision Awareness Month**

***-- Prevent Blindness Provides a Variety of Educational Resources on AMD and Low Vision, including Web Pages, Fact Sheets, Graphics and Interviews with Medical Experts --***

**CHICAGO (Jan. 26, 2022)** – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation’s oldest voluntary eye health organization, has declared February as Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Low Vision Awareness Month. According to the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#), AMD is a leading cause of vision loss in people 50 years or older, and more than 2.9 million Americans age 40 and older have low vision. Low vision is defined as a visual impairment that is not correctable through surgery, medicine, eye glasses or contact lenses.

AMD affects central vision, where sharpest vision occurs, causing difficulty conducting daily tasks such as driving, or reading. The most common form of AMD is “dry” AMD, caused by the appearance of small yellow deposits called drusen, which form under the retina. Dry AMD usually progresses slowly. “Wet” AMD generally causes more rapid and more serious vision loss. In this form of the disease, tiny new blood vessels grow under and into the retina. These blood vessels are fragile and often break and leak, causing a loss of vision.

Geographic Atrophy (GA) is the advanced form of dry AMD. Geographic atrophy results in areas of damaged tissue causing central blind spots. Prevent Blindness has created new, dedicated resources on GA, including [a dedicated webpage](#), fact sheet and a series of shareable social media graphics. Development of these new resources was sponsored by [Apellis Pharmaceuticals, Inc.](#)

In addition to the comprehensive “AMD Learning Center” at [PreventBlindness.org/AMD](#), Prevent Blindness also offers the free [GuideMe](#) app, designed for those who have been diagnosed with AMD. GuideMe works by asking a few questions about the user and the user’s AMD diagnosis. It then uses the answers to create a customized guide with helpful information, tips, resources and suggested steps to take to be proactive about protecting vision. The guide is compatible with a smart phone, tablet, laptop or PC.

For low vision, Prevent Blindness offers the no-cost “Living Well with Low Vision” online resource at [lowvision.preventblindness.org](#). Tools include a self-help guide to nonvisual skills, a visual skills workbook for people with AMD, and a guide to caring for the visually impaired. A free directory of more than 1,500 paratransit services in cities across the country is also available for patients and caregivers in need.

In February, Prevent Blindness will debut a new episode dedicated to low vision in the online [Focus on Eye Health Expert Series](#). Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness interviews R. Tracy Williams, O.D., FAAO, Executive Director at [Spectrios Institute for Low Vision](#), Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, Loyola University and Adjunct Professor, Illinois College of Optometry. Dr. Williams is also a volunteer Prevent Blindness Board of Directors member.

“The good news is that vision loss from AMD can be significantly slowed if the eye disease is diagnosed and treated early. Our goal is to raise awareness and provide useful resources to the public on AMD symptoms, risk factors, and treatment options,” said Jeff Todd. “For those who have low vision, we are committed to delivering the most useful and effective content to help patients and caregivers navigate the many challenges that vision loss presents.”

For more information on AMD, low vision and other eye diseases, please contact Prevent Blindness at [www.PreventBlindness.org](http://www.PreventBlindness.org). For a directory of financial assistance programs, 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](#).

###