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February Declared as Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Low Vision Awareness Month by Prevent Blindness

-- Prevent Blindness Provides Free Resources on AMD and Low Vision, Including Fact Sheets, Social Media Graphics, Expert and Patient Videos, An Interactive Patient Guide, and More --

CHICAGO (Jan. 29, 2024) – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation’s leading eye health and safety nonprofit organization, has declared February as Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Low Vision Awareness Month. The group is offering a variety of free educational resources to the public and professionals, including [fact sheets](#) and [social media graphics](#) in English and Spanish, dedicated online resources and informative videos.

AMD is a retinal disease that affects part of the back of the eye called the macula. When AMD damages the macula, the center part of a person’s vision may become blurred or wavy, and a blind spot may develop. According to the [National Eye Institute](#), 11 million people in the United States have AMD.

Many people with AMD may not notice symptoms right away until the disease progresses or affects both eyes. Vision changes due to AMD may include:

- Difficulty seeing in the center of vision, needed for reading, cooking, or driving
- Trouble seeing in dim light
- Straight lines (such as light poles) start to appear wavy, blurry, crooked or missing
- Fading and/or changes in the appearance of colors
- Difficulty recognizing familiar faces.

To help patients and care partners better understand AMD, a new episode in the Prevent Blindness Focus on Eye Health Expert Series, “[Age-related Macular Degeneration \(AMD\) and Low Vision](#),” is now available. Prevent Blindness President and CEO Jeff Todd discusses diagnosis, risk factors, emerging treatments and more, with W. Lloyd Clark, M.D., Palmetto Retinal Center, and Assistant Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine.

Patients and care partners are also encouraged to download the Prevent Blindness free [AMD GuideMe](#) app. GuideMe works by asking a few questions about the user and the user’s AMD diagnosis. It then creates a customized guide with helpful information, tips,

resources and suggested steps to take to be proactive about protecting vision. Users can read this guide on a smart phone, tablet, laptop or PC, and email a printable copy to the user for future reference.

Prevent Blindness recently collaborated with award-winning actress, dancer and director Debbie Allen and Regeneron for the [Gr8 Eye Movement](#), a new disease awareness campaign that aims to address gaps in how people understand the risk of developing certain serious retinal diseases, including AMD. The program provides resources to encourage people to monitor their vision every month.

An Amsler grid can be useful for AMD patients to help check the central vision in each of the eyes separately every day. Prevent Blindness offers a free printable Amsler grid at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8phj98>.

Additionally, Prevent Blindness offers resources on Geographic Atrophy (GA), an advanced form of dry AMD. Resources include a downloadable [fact sheet](#) and a series of shareable [social media graphics](#) in English and Spanish, and [a dedicated webpage](#). These resources are supported by funding from [Apellis Pharmaceuticals, Inc.](#), and [Iveric Bio](#), an Astellas Company.

Low vision is defined as vision loss that cannot be corrected by medical or surgical treatments or conventional eyeglasses, according to the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#). More than [7 million Americans have low vision](#).

To support those with low vision, and their care partners, Prevent Blindness offers the free comprehensive resource, "[Living Well With Low Vision](#)." Visitors can also find information on the latest vision research, disease-specific news and clinical trials. This resource is supported by grants from [Alexion](#), [Amgen](#), [Genentech](#), and [Johnson & Johnson](#).

As part of the "[Low Vision](#)" episode of the Focus on Eye Health Expert Series, 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, discusses low vision and low vision rehabilitation resources. Dr. Williams is also a former volunteer Prevent Blindness Board of Directors member.

As vision loss can sometimes negatively affect mental wellbeing, Prevent Blindness offers the "[Vision Loss and Mental Wellness](#)" webpage, as part of the Living Well with Low Vision resource. The site provides detailed steps to support mental health, and a listing of mental health services from a variety of organizations. And, Dr. Connie Hills, psychologist, consultant and speaker, shares her experience of vision loss from age-related macular degeneration (AMD), in the Focus on Eye Health episode, "[Vision Impairment and Mental Wellness](#)."

"AMD and low vision continue to impact the daily lives of millions, and the numbers of those affected are only going to continue to grow as our population ages," said Mr. Todd. "Our mission is to empower individuals with the information they need to help slow the progression of retinal diseases like AMD, as well as provide effective tools for patients and care partners to help navigate the challenges of vision loss through our wide library of free resources."

For more information on AMD, please visit PreventBlindness.org/AMD. For information on geographic atrophy, please visit PreventBlindness.org/geographic-atrophy. And, for more information on Living Well With Low Vision, or other general eye health information, please visit lowvision.PreventBlindness.org/.

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, and follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

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