

For Immediate Release

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National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness Celebrates 15th Anniversary in 2024

-The National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness to Commemorate 15th Anniversary Milestone by Launching a Year-long Series of Webinars, Blogs, Educational Activities, And More, to Promote Healthy Vision for Kids-

CHICAGO (Jan. 23, 2024) – The [National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness \(NCCVEH\)](#) is celebrating its 15th Anniversary in 2024. Throughout the year, the NCCVEH will be providing a variety of free resources to parents, partner organizations, and healthcare professionals, in a celebration of its 15 years of raising awareness and providing essential information on the best ways to help put children on the path to a lifetime of healthy vision.

Launching in January, the NCCVEH will be holding monthly, interactive virtual “[Office Half-Hours](#),” hosted by Kay Nottingham Chaplin, EdD, education and outreach coordinator at the NCCVEH. Registered participants may submit questions and participate in discussions on various topics including best practices for vision screening of children of all ages, tips for closing the gap between vision screening referrals and confirmatory eye exams, and much more. Office Half-Hours will occur on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. EST, beginning January 24, 2024.

In February, as part of the first-ever Prevent Blindness Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) Awareness Week (Feb. 26- March 3, 2024), the NCCVEH will debut a video series featuring advice from ROP experts, healthcare professionals, patient advocates, and parents of children with ROP. The video series will be housed on a new Prevent Blindness webpage dedicated to information for parents and professionals on ROP. Later in the year, the NCCVEH will host a webinar on Inherited Retinal Diseases, featuring parents, experts in eyecare and genetic testing.

Throughout 2024, the NCCVEH will profile various volunteer NCCVEH Advisors, highlight patient success stories in its national e-Newsletter, and host “Ask the Author” events to highlight new research on children’s vision and eye health. Additionally, the NCCVEH will produce a new resource on models for improving access to eyecare for medically underserved children in schools, community settings, and mobile eyecare outreach.

“The NCCVEH was founded by Prevent Blindness to create a public health infrastructure for vision and promote equity in the early identification and treatment of vision disorders in children. Through technical assistance and training, public

awareness, and education of families, we have helped millions of Americans learn about the importance of children’s vision to healthy development, learning, and well-being,” said Donna Fishman, director of the NCCVEH. “Today, the NCCVEH is a trusted source of information and a respected convenor of all stakeholders in children’s vision and eye health including public health, eye care, health care, early childhood education and care, schools, and families.”

After years of advocating for federal support of children’s vision and eye health, in 2009, Prevent Blindness was awarded a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help launch the NCCVEH. The NCCVEH works in collaboration with national and state partners across the country to serve as a technical resource center to state and local public health systems in the development/improvement of comprehensive vision health programs for children.

Additionally, the NCCVEH works to enhance existing efforts in the surveillance of children’s vision and eye health, screenings, eye exams, and pathways to care, while working to reduce health disparities impacting access to eye care for children. The NCCVEH develops and disseminates educational tools and information that promotes a comprehensive approach to children’s vision health, including identifying needed public policy around children’s vision.

Over the past 15 years, the NCCVEH has achieved numerous accomplishments including:

- Beginning in 2010, experts developed recommendations on improving the systems that address vision health for children, resulting in three peer-reviewed papers published in *Optometry and Vision Science* in January 2015.
- In 2014, the annual “[Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children’s Vision Award](#)” was established to recognize efforts by an individual, or group of individuals, to improve public health approaches for children’s vision and eye health at the state or national level.
- In 2015, the NCCVEH, in collaboration with the National Institute for Child Health Quality, launched the [Improving Children’s Vision: Systems, Stakeholders, and Support Quality Improvement \(QI\) Collaborative](#), to improve the systems supporting children’s vision and eye health.
- In 2019, the NCCVEH conducted the [Community of Practice: Better Vision Together](#) program, a learning and sharing opportunity to improve vision and eye health in children ages 5 years old and younger for teams of diverse stakeholders in eight states.
- In 2021 the NCCVEH established [The Children’s Vision Equity Alliance](#), with multiple partners. This effort continues today, collectively working to advance equity in children’s vision and eye health through education, access, policies, and

partnerships.

- In 2023, the NCCVEH enhanced the skills of more than 4,000 professionals through 18 presentations and webinars and technical assistance to individuals, school districts, and organizations in every state, impacting the vision and eye health of millions of children.
- Additionally in 2023, the [Prevent Blindness Children's Vision Screening Certification Course](#), which includes an online modular learning class followed by a virtual skills assessment conducted with our certified trainer, certified a total of 237 individuals from 40 states as children's vision screeners. In total, 275,000 children received evidence-based vision screening from those certified through the NCCVEH. This is in addition to the many thousands of children screened through Prevent Blindness Affiliates across the country.

“The positive impact of the National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness over the past 15 years has been profound. Improvements in systems of care for children’s vision can increase healthcare professional proficiencies, promote improved follow up to care, and build family trust in primary care providers and vision specialists,” said Kira Baldonado, vice president of public health and policy at Prevent Blindness, who helped launch the NCCVEH. “Promoting improvements for vision and eye health in all components of the system results in better vision health, more empowered families, and reduced eye health disparities. This is what all children deserve – to have healthy vision for life.”

Prevent Blindness is asking the public to help celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the NCCVEH by making a donation – a suggested gift of \$15 (\$1 for every year of the NCCVEH) will support the group's important work, providing resources to help children see better to live, grow, and learn. Donations may be made directly at: <https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/15th-anniversary-donate/>.

For information about the NCCVEH and its resources, please visit <https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/>, or contact Donna Fishman at dfishman@PreventBlindness.org.

About the National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness (NCCVEH)

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.

Serving as a major resource for the establishment of a public health infrastructure, the NCCVEH advances and promotes children’s vision and eye care, providing leadership and training to public entities throughout the United States. The NCCVEH is advised by a committee of national experts and leaders from the fields of ophthalmology,

optometry, pediatrics, nursing, public health, early childhood education and care, and family advocates to guide the work and recommendations of the NCCVEH. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call (800) 331-2020, or visit us at <https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/>.

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