

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Prevent Blindness Announces New Diabetes + the Eyes Advisory Committee

- New Prevent Blindness “Diabetes + the Eyes” Advisory Committee to address diabetes, the leading cause of blindness in working-age adults -

CHICAGO (Aug. 12, 2025)- [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation’s leading patient advocacy organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight, has announced the creation of the Prevent Blindness “Diabetes + the Eyes Advisory Committee.” The new committee provides guidance to Prevent Blindness for the implementation of diabetes and eye health programming and education, including increased awareness and early identification of diabetes-related eye diseases, improved access to eye care and treatment, policy development, research, and surveillance. The all-volunteer group consists of leaders in ophthalmology, optometry, public health, and the vision and eye health industry, as well as nonprofit organizations focused on diabetes education, vision rehabilitation, patient advocacy, and more. Individuals living with diabetes and their allies are also represented.

[Diabetes-related retinopathy](#) is a leading cause of blindness in American adults, affecting over one in four of those living with diabetes. According to the [National Eye Institute](#), diabetes-related retinopathy may lead to a more serious eye condition called [diabetes-related macular edema](#), and individuals are at increased risk for cataracts, glaucoma, and retinal detachment. Early detection and treatment are critical as the risk of significant vision loss and blindness increases the longer someone has diabetes.

Members of the Prevent Blindness Diabetes + the Eyes Advisory Committee include:

- Karen Allison, MD, MBA, FACS – Flaum Eye Institute, University of Rochester Medical Center, Prevent Blindness Scientific Committee Chair and Prevent Blindness Board of Directors member
- Meagan Baker, OD, FAAO – Cherry Health, Heart of the City Health Center
- Premilla Banwait, OD, MPH, FAAO – UnitedHealthcare Vision
- Geoffrey E. Bradford, MD, MS – West Virginia University Eye Institute
- Jim Brocato – Ocular Therapeutix and Prevent Blindness Board of Directors member

- M. Odette Brown – American Diabetes Association
- Jacobi Cleaver, OD, FAAO – BlackEyeCare Perspective
- Roberto Díaz-Rohena, MD – University of Texas Health Science Center- San Antonio, Audie Murphy Veterans Administration Medical Center
- Luke Ertle, MPH – Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
- Matthew Garza – The diaTribe Foundation
- Patricia Grant, PhD – The Chicago Lighthouse
- Tareq Issam Nabhan, OD – College of Optometry, University of Missouri-St. Louis
- Nicole Pogue, OD, FAAO – New England College of Optometry
- Rajeev S. Ramchandran, MD, MBA – Flaum Eye Institute, University of Rochester Medical Center
- Pat Segu, OD, FAAO, ABO – College of Optometry, University of Houston
- Carolina Solis-Herrera, MD, DABOM, DMDNO – Center for Metabolic Health, University of Texas Health San Antonio
- Serena Valentine – CORE Initiative
- Mary Kate Walters, OD, FAAO – VIEW Optometry, University of Houston College of Optometry, Northside Eye Care

Patient advocates include Tamara Joseph, [Prevent Blindness ASPECT Patient Engagement Program](#) graduate, and Jennifer Kim. Representatives from Prevent Blindness affiliates are also part of the Committee, including [Prevent Blindness Georgia](#), [Prevent Blindness North Carolina](#), [Prevent Blindness Ohio](#), [Prevent Blindness Texas](#), and [Prevent Blindness Wisconsin](#).

Guided in part by its new Diabetes + the Eyes Advisory Committee, Prevent Blindness is implementing new initiatives to reduce diabetes-related eye disease:

- Piloting refined systems of care in North Carolina Community Health Centers in partnership with Prevent Blindness North Carolina. The project will test new educational materials for parents of children with diabetes and young adults; expand tele-retinal screenings for individuals under 40 in community health centers, and improve care coordination. This effort is made possible with support

from [UnitedHealthcare](#).

- Developing and launching a bilingual Prevent Blindness Eye Health Audio Library which will provide short, educational content based on the voice requests of the user. The content can be shared with the user via text message. The platform is in the final stage of testing and will be launched into clinic settings in collaboration with participating affiliates and partners. This effort is made possible with support from [Regeneron](#) and [Genentech](#).
- Creating a modular education program for eye care providers and allied health professionals focused on patient-centered, bias-free care. This effort is informed by extensive community-based research, including key informant interviews and focus groups across five states, identifying gaps in care and patient experiences. The modules are in development now and will be launched via the [Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology's](#) ophthalmic tech Continuing Education Unit (CEU) program as well as the [American Optometric Association's](#) paraoptometric CEU program. This effort is also made possible with support from Regeneron and Genentech.

These new efforts will be added to existing resources, including the [Diabetes + the Eyes Educational Toolkit](#) created in 2019 to help educate the public on diabetes and its effects on vision, along with providing resources to assist in access to eyecare. This program, with materials available in English and Spanish, is supported by funding from Regeneron and [VSP Vision](#).

"We are thrilled to welcome this impressive group of leaders to our new Diabetes + the Eyes Advisory Committee," said Jeff Todd, Prevent Blindness president and CEO. "By bringing together different perspectives, expertise, and lived experiences, we are continuing our mission to bring an end to vision loss from diabetes."

For general diabetes-related eye disease information, please visit [PreventBlindness.org/diabetes](https://preventblindness.org/diabetes). For more information on the "Diabetes + the Eyes" program, please visit [PreventBlindness.org/diabetes-and-eyes-educational-toolkit](https://preventblindness.org/diabetes-and-eyes-educational-toolkit). For a free listing of organizations and services that provide financial assistance for vision care in English or Spanish, please 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](https://www.preventblindness.org), and follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), and [YouTube](#).

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