

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Prevent Blindness
Sarah Hecker
Phone: (312) 363-6035
shecker@preventblindness.org

**Prevent Blindness Declares Fourth Annual Geographic Atrophy
Awareness Week as Dec. 2-8, 2024**

-- Prevent Blindness provides free educational resources on geographic atrophy, a form of dry age-related macular degeneration, including fact sheets, a dedicated webpage, expert videos, and more --

CHICAGO (Nov. 26, 2024) – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation's leading nonprofit eye health organization, is announcing Dec. 2-8, 2024, as its fourth annual Geographic Atrophy (GA) Awareness Week. GA is an advanced form of dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD). It is estimated that 1 million people in the United States have GA.

Prevent Blindness offers free educational resources on GA including a [comprehensive fact sheet](#) and a series of [social media graphics](#), available in English and Spanish, a dedicated web page and expert videos. This year's GA Awareness Week is supported by funding from [Apellis Pharmaceuticals, Inc.](#)

While the cause of GA is unknown, the following can increase the risk for GA:

- Family history of AMD
- Age – over 60 years old
- Race – Caucasians have a higher rate of AMD
- Light colored eyes
- Smoking
- Genetics
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Women not using menopausal hormone replacement therapy
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- High sun exposure throughout the life span
- Poor diet with a low intake of fruits and vegetables (specifically dark green leafy vegetables)

To help inform GA patients and care partners, Prevent Blindness offers the Focus on Eye Health Expert Series episode, "[Advancements in Treatments for Geographic Atrophy](#)," featuring Rajeev S. Ramchandran, MD, MBA, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, Flaum Eye Institute, University of Rochester Medical Center.

Additional Focus on Eye Health Expert Series episodes include:

- “[Geographic Atrophy and Patient Support](#),” featuring [Prevent Blindness Ohio](#) Past President and CEO, Sherry Williams, sharing her story as a care partner for her mother diagnosed with GA.
- The “[Geographic Atrophy](#)” episode featuring Janet S. Sunness, MD, medical director of the Richard E. Hoover Low Vision Rehabilitation Services at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center.

For GA and/or AMD patients and their care partners, Prevent Blindness offers the free resource, [Living Well With Low Vision](#). This program provides a variety of free directories, a library of self-help guides, downloadable apps including “[GuideME for AMD](#),” access to clinical trial research, and recent AMD research news.

Additionally, Prevent Blindness offers GA patients and others the [Vision Loss and Mental Wellness](#) resource from its Living Well With Low Vision program. As loss of vision can lead to feelings of depression, anxiety, and loss of independence, some individuals may notice a change in their desire to socialize with others, or increased frustration with the additional time it may take to accomplish tasks of daily living. Prevent Blindness encourages those experiencing these types of issues to seek support groups of others who are living with GA.

“This is an exciting time for research and treatment options for those with geographic atrophy,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “We encourage patients to check out our various Geographic Atrophy resources and work directly with their eye doctor to put together the best treatment plan to help save sight.”

For more information on geographic atrophy, please visit <https://preventblindness.org/geographic-atrophy>. For more information on low vision and mental wellness, please visit <https://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](#), [TikTok](#), and [YouTube](#).

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