Vision for Tomorrow

Ohio’s Aging Eye
Public Private Partnership
A statewide collaboration preparing for the growth of aging eye challenges in Ohio

2016 Report to the Governor and the Ohio General Assembly

An estimated 3.6 million Ohioans have vision problems and, as the population ages, this number will only increase! The estimated annual financial burden to the Ohio economy due to vision problems, refractive errors, visual impairment and blindness is $5.4 billion.
Ohio’s Aging Eye Public Private Partnership’s (AEPPP) “Vision for Tomorrow” is to reduce the incidence of vision loss by addressing issues related to vision care public policy, vision care services, public and professional awareness and vision research.

According to the Ohio 2016 State Health Assessment, there is an “urgent need to improve health and well-being in Ohio.” Preserving healthy eyesight is vital to improve both physical and mental health, especially in Ohio’s growing senior population. People with vision impairment are often more likely to have poorer health and multiple chronic health conditions. Among other concerns, blindness and low vision contribute to cognitive decline and falls, increase the incidence of depression and greatly affect one’s interest and ability to seek medical care.

The estimated number of vision problem cases in Ohio is 3,623,583, and the estimated financial impact due to vision problems, refractive error, visual impairment, and blindness is $5.4 billion annually!

The AEPPP has joined with the Ohio Public Health Association’s Vision Care Section, The Ohio State University College of Optometry, the Ohio Department of Aging and the Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness to implement Ohio’s Vision and Eye Health Initiative. The goal of this initiative is to improve vision and eye health through interventions that advance vision and eye health as public health priorities. Ohio is one of three states involved in this initiative led by the National Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors.

AEPPP activities in 2016 included:

- “Aging Eye Summit: Connecting the Dots” in conjunction with Case Western Reserve Department of Ophthalmology.
- Adult Vision Screening and HealthyEyes training throughout the State.
- Evidenced-based healthy aging programs that helped participants learn strategies to manage diabetes, depression and the risk of falling.
- Educational and awareness activities related to vision health.
- Two Vision Research Fellowship Award showcased at Scientific Forum.

We encourage government leaders, public health professionals, health care providers, business and community leaders, and all Ohioans to work together to curtail the growth of vision problems in Ohio. To that end, we offer our resources and services to you.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Dr. Rafat R. Ansari
Vision Research Senior Scientist
NASA John H. Glenn Research Center

Stephanie M. Loucka
Director, Ohio Department of Aging

Co-Chair

Stephanie M. Loucka
Vision Research Co-Chair:
Heithem El-Hodiri, PhD
Associate Professor, The Center for Molecular and Human Genetics, The Research Institute at Nationwide Children’s Hospital
Andrew Hartwick, OD, PhD
Assistant Professor, College of Optometry, The Ohio State University

Member Organizations:
Health Services Advisory Group
NASA John H. Glenn Research Center
Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education

Ohio Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Impaired
Ohio Department of Aging
Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Insurance/OSHIIP
Ohio Ophthalmological Society
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Ohio Optometric Association
Ohio Public Health Association
Ohio Veterans Visual Impairment Services Team
Opticians Association of Ohio
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate
State Senator Capri Cafaro
State Representative Mike Duffey

Leadership

Dr. Rafat R. Ansari
Vision Research Senior Scientist
NASA John H. Glenn Research Center

Stephanie M. Loucka
Director, Ohio Department of Aging

Advocacy and Awareness Co-Chairs:
Jackie Davis, OD, MPH
Associate Professor, College of Optometry, The Ohio State University
Marcus J. Molea, AICP
Strategic Partnerships, Elder Connections Division, Ohio Department of Aging
Vision for Tomorrow: Policy and Program Recommendations

The work of the AEPPP is guided by the following programmatic and public policy recommendations developed by consensus as having the most impact upon the partnership’s goal of curbing vision loss among Ohio’s aging population:

1. Integrate adult vision messaging and strategies into existing efforts at the Ohio Department of Health (i.e. tobacco cessation, primary care and rural health, diabetes prevention and control, health promotion, falls prevention) and include both adult and child vision issues, including aging vision, in state and local health improvement planning.

2. Support measures that increase multidisciplinary vision screening practices and facilitate mechanisms for follow up care.

3. Support and advocate for comprehensive and corrective preventive eye/vision care services for adults in the state Medicaid budget.

4. Support and advocate for comprehensive and corrective preventive eye/vision care benefits for all Medicare recipients.

5. Establish adult vision screening as an essential benefit to the Medicare annual medical exam.

6. Support the continued expansion and development of comprehensive vision care services within Ohio’s federally qualified health centers.

7. Support and advocate for inclusion of vision questions in Ohio and national data collection tools such as the Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey (OMAS), Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to provide outcome data on which to base statewide public health vision programming.

8. Support and advocate for health insurance coverage comprehensive vision care, vision education and vision rehabilitation services.

9. Support the recommendations of Governor Kasich’s Workforce Integration Task Force, which are aimed at removing barriers to employment for the deaf and blind communities and all Ohio citizens in reaching their highest employment potential.

10. Support vision-related summits and other activities that support awareness and encourage research collaboration and expansion.

11. Develop a state tax incentive for the donors of in-kind professional services (such as comprehensive eye exams and eye surgeries) that benefit vulnerable populations in need of care.
Fellowship Award Recipients
Cornelia Peterson (left) from The Ohio State University College of Optometry and Alexandra Castillejos (right) from Case Western Reserve School of Medicine received Vision Research Fellowship Awards. The Fellowship program was developed by the AEPPP to encourage young scientists to enter the field of vision research.

Aging Eye Summit: Connecting the Dots
The AEPPP hosted the summit in conjunction with the Case Western Reserve Department of Ophthalmology. More than 100 participants learned about the growth of aging eye disease and the impact on individuals, families and communities.

Financial Supporters:
The work of Ohio’s Aging Eye Public Private Partnership is supported entirely by donated funds, products and services from member organizations, as well as contributions from private sources. Prevent Blindness serves as the fiscal agent for the partnership. Support for educational materials, advocacy, printing, supplies and meeting expenses have been provided by:

- Case Western Reserve University Department of Ophthalmology
- Ohio Department of Aging
- Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate
- The Vision Research Fellowship Program is supported by a grant from the Sarah E. Slack Prevention of Blindness Fund, Muskingum County Community Foundation and the Levin Family Foundation.

Sources: