

# **History and Accomplishments of Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership: 2003-2018**

On March 21, 2002, the Fourth Edition of *Vision Problems in the US* was released in Washington, DC, in conjunction with a press conference featuring Ohio Congressman Patrick J. Tiberi and a vision education symposium featuring esteemed vision researchers from across the United States. This report underscored the fact that vision problems were a growing concern for the nation's aging population. It was published by Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute; and was the only comprehensive resource detailing the prevalence of major eye diseases that affect America's senior citizens.

Armed with the information from *Vision Problems in the US*, Prevent Blindness Ohio convened a coalition of several large and diverse statewide organizations – both public and private - that shared a common interest of preventing vision loss and blindness among adults in Ohio. This group came together to plan a conference entitled "Ohio's Vision...Awaken to the Challenge;" which was held on the campus of the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland on April 23, 2003. The conference attracted approximately 110 individuals from state government, eye care, long-term care, universities, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations that served senior citizens in the State of Ohio. The conference concluded with the formation of an on-going statewide collaboration of organizations to continue work in preparing for future vision needs of Ohio's aging population. At this conference, a Resolution was read from Governor Bob Taft that stated:

**Whereas**, on April 28, 2003, an Aging Eye Public Private Partnership has been established; and

**Whereas**, more than 2.5 million Ohioans will be affected from the threat of blindness from age-related eye disease.

The number of Ohio seniors affected by these diseases is expected to double over the next 30 years as the Baby

Boomer generation ages, largely resulting from the eye disease of diabetic retinopathy, cataract, glaucoma, and

age-related macular degeneration (AMD); and

**Whereas**, the Aging Eye Public Private Partnership will be formed within the Department of Aging to develop a

strategic plan of action for public/private partnerships to address issues relating to vision care public policy,

vision care services, vision education, and vision research that impact the quality of life for Ohio's seniors now

and in the future; and

**Whereas**, the Aging Eye Public Private Partnership will build partnerships and collaborations to provide input to

various state agencies and organizations concerned with Ohio's aging population to insure a consistent and

comprehensive statewide plan of action. Advise and make recommendations as to ways of increasing awareness

about the growing future vision needs of Ohio's aging population; and examine and recommend best practices for

seniors in the area of identifying eye problems and maintaining healthy eyes; and

**Whereas**, the formation of an Aging Eye Public Private Partnership is supported by the following organizations:

NASA Glenn Research Center, National Governors Association, Office of the Governor, Ohio Department of Aging,

Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio ophthalmological Society, Ohio

Optometric Association, Ohio Veteran's Administration Work Group, Opticians Association of Ohio, and Prevent

Blindness Ohio.

**Now, Therefore, I, Bob Taft, Governor of the State of Ohio**, do hereby recognize April 28, 2003, as the

### **Aging Eye Public/Private Partnership**

throughout the State of Ohio and encourage all Ohioans to join with public and private entities across the state in understanding the importance of vision care.

The inaugural members of the Aging Eye Partnership were from the following organizations:

Association of Philanthropic Homes for the Aging

Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Association of Ohio Health Commissioners

Council for Older Adults

KnowledgeWorks Foundation

Ohio Council for Home Care

Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education

Ohio Agencies Serving the Visually Impaired

NASA Glenn Research Center

Ohio Department of Health

Ohio Department of Insurance

Representative Kathleen Chandler

Ohio Nurses Association

Ohio Ophthalmological Society

Senator Steve Stivers

Senator Randy Gardner

Ohio Rehabilitative Services Commission

Ohio Osteopathic Association

Ohio Optometric Association

Ohio Veterans Visual Impairment Services Team

Opticians Association of Ohio

Prevent Blindness Ohio

Following the very successful inaugural conference on April 28, 2003, the Aging Eye Public Private Partnership's first organizational meeting was held on September 24, 2003. After that meeting, the following News Release was issued by the Ohio Department of Aging:

**STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS ON OHIO'S VISION ISSUES**  
**Aging Eye Public/Private Partnership calls for awareness of threats to**

**vision**

**Columbus** – Statewide organizations from the public and private sectors met September 24 to begin work on a strategic plan of action to address eye issues.

“The work of Ohio’s Aging Eye Public/Private Partnership is to raise awareness of this important health issue for Ohioans,” said Director Joan Lawrence of the Ohio Department of Aging and co-chair of the group.

“As a state we must be informed so that we can prepare for the early detection, treatment and rehabilitation services that will be needed,” said Dr. Robert Newcomb, co-chair of the Aging Eye Public Private Partnership.

More Ohioans than ever are facing the threat of blindness from age-related eye disease. The number of Ohio seniors affected by these diseases is expected to double over the next 30 years as the Baby Boomer generation ages, largely resulting from the eye diseases of diabetic retinopathy, cataract, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). More than 2.5 million Ohioans will be affected.

The Partnership discussed ways to address vision care public policy, vision care services, vision education, and vision research that impact the quality of life for Ohio’s seniors now and in the future. The formation of the Partnership and its on-going work is supported by a Proclamation from Governor Bob Taft.

The Partnership established a mission and five specific and measurable responsibilities:

#### Mission

The Aging Eye Public/Private Partnership is an initiative supported by the Ohio Department of Aging whose mission is to develop a strategic plan of action to address issues relating to vision care public policy, vision care services, vision education, and vision research that impact the quality of life for Ohio's seniors now and in the future. The formation of the Partnership and its on-going work is supported by a Proclamation from the Governor of Ohio.

1. Build partnerships and collaborations to provide input to various state agencies and organizations concerned with Ohio's aging population to insure a consistent and comprehensive statewide plan of action.
2. Advise and make recommendations as to ways of increasing awareness about the growing future vision needs of Ohio's aging population.
3. Examine and recommend best practices for seniors in the area of identifying eye problems and maintaining healthy eyes.
4. Identify ways to increase vision research and vision research collaborations that seek the causes of and cure for sight-robbing eye diseases.
5. Provide annual reports which indentify and assess the status of its work within Ohio and recommend appropriate actions by both the private and public sector.

Under the leadership of the first AEPPP co-chairs, Joan Lawrence, Director-Ohio Department of Aging and Bob Newcomb, Professor, The Ohio State University College of Optometry, three subcommittees were established in 2004 to make the work of organization more efficient: Vision Research (initially chaired by Dr. Rafat Ansari from the NASA Glenn Research Center), Public and Professional Awareness (initially chaired by Mr. Rick Bunner, former Ohio Department of Health Program Administrator and Past Board Chair of Prevent Blindness Ohio), and Public Policy (initially chaired by Mr. Bill Casto, who at the time was the Director of Ohio's Bureau of Services for Visually Impaired).

During its first decade, the AEPPP has accomplished much; and has also been recognized several times for its unique contributions in the fight to prevent blindness and visual impairment. Some of our accomplishments to date include:

#### **2004:**

- Ohio's AEPPP website went "live" in January of 2004 ([www.preventblindness.org/ohio/agingeye](http://www.preventblindness.org/ohio/agingeye))
- *Vision Problems in Ohio* was developed by the AEPPP and Prevent Blindness Ohio, based upon the national study *Vision Problems in the U.S.* published by Prevent Blindness America, the National Eye Institute (NEI), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- Informational brochures and fact sheets describing the growth of vision loss among Ohio's seniors were developed
- The AEPPP partnered with the Ohio Department of Health to urge the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement an optional vision module in its annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) health monitoring telephone survey.

- Developed a 12-question pre/post vision questionnaire that AEPPP member organizations could utilize with a variety of audiences to raise awareness of the projected growth rates of vision loss among Ohio's seniors
- Hosted a Legislative Breakfast on May 19 that raised awareness among Ohio policy-makers about aging eye issues and the need to create a plan of action for the state. AEPPP members State Senators Randy Gardner and Steve Stivers issued a Letter of Commendation from the Ohio senate, and State Representative Kathleen Chandler issued a Letter of Commendation from the House of Representatives to raise awareness of the need for the Partnership's activities. Following this, Senate Concurrent Resolution 33, which formed the Task Force for Preserving Adult Vision, was passed unanimously in the closing days of the 125<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.
- The Ohio Eye Research Directory was compiled and listed 72 Ohio researchers that were currently involved in 257 vision research projects at 14 institutions of higher education in the state.

#### **2005:**

- Ohio Vision Loss Research Symposium on June 6 at COSI – the Center for Science and Industry in Columbus – where 130 leaders from vision research, public health, the aging network, social service agencies, and government attended
- Created a *Resource Directory of Eye Care and Vision Rehabilitation Services in Ohio* and distributed this informational brochure to the Ohio General assembly, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio department of Aging, and AEPPP member organizations
- Supported continuation of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) optional vision module
- Prepared recommendations for AEPPP co-chair Merle Kearns, Director of the Ohio Department of Aging to present at the 2005 White House Conference on Aging
- Prepared a list of measurable recommendations that were presented to the Legislative Task Force for the Preservation of Adult Vision, some of which were (1) create an Office of Aging Vision or coordinating position within the Ohio Department of Health, (2) encourage the Third Frontier Initiative of the Ohio department of Development to support communication and collaboration among vision research organizations within the state, (3) support measures that increase vision screening practices among providers of primary health care, and (4) maintain optional preventive vision care services for 800,000 Ohio adults in the state Medicaid budget, among others
- Prepared a 2005 *Report to Governor Bob Taft & the Ohio General Assembly*

#### **2006:**

- Updated the *Resource Directory of Eye Care and Vision Rehabilitation Services in Ohio* and the *Ohio Vision Research Directory*
- In June, Dr. Robert Newcomb and Mr. Rick Bunner appeared on "Finer with Age," the Ohio Department of Aging's cable television program.
- Made presentations in August to the Ohio House Health Committee and Senate Health and Human Service and Aging Committee regarding the projected growth of aging eye diseases and the activities of the Partnership

- Co-sponsored a Vision Research Scientific Forum on November 9 featuring presentations from winners of Prevent Blindness Ohio's Young Investigator Student Fellowship Awards for Female Scholars in Vision Research
- Prepared a 2006 *Report to Governor Bob Taft & the Ohio General Assembly*

#### **2007:**

- The American Public Health Association's Vision Care Section's Distinguished Service Award was presented to the AEPPP in November
- In May, the Partnership co-sponsored another very successful Aging Eye Summit at the Cole Eye Institute, this time focusing on Age-related Macular Degeneration. More than 100 people attended the meeting, which addressed the growing threat of vision loss and blindness from AMD and the latest in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation
- In June, State Senator Ray Miller and the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board invited the AEPPP to participate in the inaugural Legislative Health Fair at the statehouse
- In November, the Partnership again co-sponsored the Vision Research Scientific Forum for young female researchers in vision
- Support for continuing the BRFSS optional vision module was offered and accepted by the Ohio Department of Health and the CDC
- The website and directories were maintained and updated, as needed
- Prepared a 2007 *Report to Governor Ted Strickland & the Ohio General Assembly*

#### **2008:**

- Co-sponsored a Diabetic Retinopathy Summit at the Cole Eye Institute in Cleveland on June 12, where 130 world-renowned researchers and physicians joined patients and patient-advocate groups to learn more about the prevention, detection, treatment and rehabilitation of this leading cause of adult blindness in adults
- In October, Drs. Robert Newcomb and Larry Leguire were interviewed by the Ohio Department of Aging's Director Barbara Riley on the Department's cable television program, "Finer with Age."
- Again co-sponsored a Vision Research Scientific Forum in November for young female investigators in vision research
- Updated *Vision Problems in Ohio*, now in its fourth edition, to provide timely estimates of the prevalence of sight-threatening eye diseases in Ohio's senior citizen population as well as the economic impact of such diseases on a statewide and county level
- Reviewed and updated, as needed, the Partnership's 13 recommendations to curb the projected growth of adult vision loss and blindness in Ohio
- Updated the AEPPP's Vision Care Resource Guide of statewide telephone numbers and websites to assist individuals and organizations in finding vision care, prescription assistance, rehabilitation services, educational materials, and access to low- or no-cost eye exams.
- Prepared a 2008 *Report to Governor Ted Strickland & the Ohio General Assembly*

**2009:**

- Merged the Public and Professional Awareness and the Public Policy subcommittees into a new one: the Advocacy and Awareness Sub-Committee
- In cooperation with Prevent Blindness Ohio and the Ohio Department of Health, the Partnership held a workshop on February 27 at the Department of Health to discuss age-related eye diseases, vision resources in our state, best practices, collaborative funding opportunities, how to get our message to local health departments, and vision problems as they relate to chronic diseases, health disparities, falls/injury prevention, and tobacco use.
- Organized a Legislative Briefing on September 23 where Ohio Department of Aging Director, Barbara Riley, discussed the goals and objectives of the Partnership and Dr. Robert Newcomb discussed the scope of aging eye diseases in our state. Recognized four legislative “Vision Champions” at that meeting: State Representatives Barbara Boyd, Randy Gardner, Tom Letson, and Kathleen Chandler.
- Sponsored the Scientific Forum on November 18 which recognized the five 2009 Young Investigator Student Fellowship Award winners for Female Scholars in Vision Research. Dr. Katia Del Rio-Tsonis from Miami University was the keynote speaker.
- Prepared a 2009 *Report to Governor Ted Strickland & the Ohio General Assembly*

**2010:**

- In January, the Healthy Ohio website, hosted by the Ohio Department of Health, promoted glaucoma awareness
- On March 19, Dr. Robert Newcomb presented a poster at the National Academies of Practice annual meeting in Washington, DC, which described the mission, goals, objectives, and accomplishments of the AEPPP to an audience of ten different health care disciplines
- In April, Governor Ted Strickland issued a Proclamation declaring April as “Aging Eyes Month in Ohio”
- On June 16, over 120 participants attended an Eye Disease Summit on Diabetic Eye Disease, which was held at the Havener Eye Institute at The Ohio State University
- Vision care resources were provided to seniors who attended the Welcome to Medicare events throughout the state hosted by the Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information program (OSHIIP) of the Ohio Department of Insurance
- Publicized new research cited in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* that found “Untreated poor vision is associated with cognitive decline, particularly Alzheimer’s disease.”
- On September 28, Dr. Robert Newcomb was interviewed on WMKV 89.3 FM in Cincinnati’s *Medicare Moment* show by Anne Fredrickson
- On November 9, four Young Investigator Student Fellowship Award winners were recognized at the annual Scientific Forum. Dr. Colleen Cebulla from the OSU Department of Ophthalmology was the keynote speaker
- Prepared a 2010 *Report to the Governor & the Ohio General Assembly*

**2011:**

- On February 9, Prevent Blindness Ohio hosted a legislative breakfast where aging eye issues were addressed by members of the AEPPP

- On March 24, Governor John Kasich signed an Executive Resolution recognizing Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership. The Resolution encouraged all Ohioans to join with public and private entities in understanding the importance of vision care.
- On June 16, over 100 people participated in the Aging Eye Summit: Focus on Age-Related Macular Degeneration which was co-hosted by the Partnership and the Haverer Eye Institute at The Ohio State University
- Four Fellowship awards were presented to female scholars conducting vision related research at the University of Cincinnati, the Cole Eye Institute, and The Ohio State University
- On November 15, the AEPPP presented a Legislative Briefing entitled "The State of Vision, Aging, and Public Health in Ohio" which highlighted data from the Ohio Vision Module of the Ohio Department of Health's 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey. In addition, the AEPPP's Co-Chairs for the Advocacy and Awareness sub-committee, Rick Bunner and Marc Molea, spoke on how government can promote preventive eye care and how the Partnership can help legislators' constituents
- Updated the 2005 Legislative Task Force's recommendations for the Preservation of Adult Vision
- Prepared a 2011 *Report to the Governor & the Ohio General Assembly*

## **2012:**

- On February 13, Sherry Williams and Bob Newcomb appeared on local television (NBC affiliate WCMH) as guests of Gail Hogan's "Daytime Columbus" program.
- On February 26, there was a feature article by Misti Crane in *The Columbus Dispatch* about aging eye diseases, in which both Bob Newcomb and Rick Bunner were quoted.
- The AEPPP was cited in Prevent Blindness America's *The Vision Connection: Integrating Vision into State Health Programs* as an example of how to build successful partnerships. Ohio was one of only four states recognized in this national publication.
- A bill recognizing March as Macular Degeneration Month was signed by Governor Kasich. It was co-sponsored by State Representatives Tom Letson and Marlene Anielski.
- On June 12, in cooperation with the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Cincinnati, the "Aging Eye Summit: Focus on Glaucoma" was held at UC's Vontz Center for Molecular Studies. 101 people attended., The Partnership is involved with the planning of community programming for the Global Diabetes Summit which will be held in Columbus On November 17, 2012
- Longtime co-chair Dr. Robert Newcomb retired in May 2012 and Dr. Rafat Ansari – NASA Glenn Research Center became the new co-chair. He serves along with the Director of the Ohio Department of Aging Bonnie Kantor -Burman

## **Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership Policy and Program Recommendations:**

1. Appoint an individual or a coordinating position for aging vision in the next biennial budget within the Ohio Department of Health-Division of Prevention and Health Promotion to coordinate vision preservation and educational activities across Ohio.
2. Support on-going use of the Optional Vision Module of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Health to provide outcome data on which to base statewide public health vision programming.
3. Maintain optional preventive vision care services for the more than 500,000 Ohio adults in the state Medicaid budget.
4. Encourage the Ohio Association of Community Health Centers and its partners to provide technical assistance and support to Ohio's Federally Qualified Health Centers that focus on adult vision loss and provide training and technical assistance to Health Center professionals to implement adult vision assessment in a general wellness exam and emphasize the urgency of professional vision care for patients with diabetes.
5. Support measures that increase vision screening practices among providers of primary health care in the medical home and other sites.
6. Support preventive eye care benefits for all Medicare recipients.
7. Establish adult vision screening as an essential benefit to the Medicare annual medical exam.
8. 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.
9. Support health insurance coverage for basic vision care, vision education and for vision rehabilitation services.
10. Support vision related Summits that support awareness and encourage research, collaboration and expansion.

### **2013:**

- Information regarding "The Aging Eye in Ohio" was shared with legislators and their staff at a legislative breakfast on Feb. 27.
- On April 24, Case Western Reserve University/University Hospitals, the AEPPP and Prevent Blindness Ohio hosted "The Aging Eye: Today's Treatment-Tomorrow's

Hope.” More than 140 people attended the conference, which was an official “Year of Vitality” event in Cleveland in conjunction with the 2013 National Senior Games.

- AEPPP co-chair, Rafat Ansari, presented the work of the AEPPP on a panel at the Prevent Blindness national summit, “Focus on Eye Health,” held June 18 in Washington, D.C.
- Vision Research Fellowship Awards were presented to Jillian Chong from The Ohio State University and Gina Wilson, from Kent State University and Northeast Ohio Medical University to support their glaucoma related research. They presented their research at a scientific forum Nov. 19. Dr. Linda Greff from the Cincinnati Eye Institute spoke about overcoming career challenges for women in science.
- The Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) of the Ohio Department of Insurance provided vision care resources to elders at the program’s “Welcome to Medicare” events.
- Prevent Blindness Ohio provided adult vision screening services and training for volunteers throughout the state.
- The Ohio Department of Aging, Ohio Department of Health and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities provided evidence-based healthy lifestyle programs that provide health benefits and promote disease prevention. Programs include Healthy U chronic disease self-management program, Healthy-U: Diabetes and Healthy IDEAS, a depression self-management program.
- AEPPP partners collaborated to spread the word about the importance of maintaining healthy vision to prevent falls. (see next four points)
- The Ohio Department of Aging launched STEADY U Ohio, a comprehensive falls prevention initiative, in September 2013.
- Members of the AEPPP participate in the Ohio Injury Prevention Partnership’s Ohio Older Adult Falls Prevention Coalition led by the Ohio Department of Health.
- The Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education is conducting research regarding falls.
- Prevent Blindness Ohio published letters regarding vision and falls in the Toledo Blade and Columbus Dispatch in recognition of Falls Prevention Week.

#### **2014:**

- Jackie Davis, OD, MPH from The Ohio State University and Laura Schwartz from Prevent Blindness discussed aging eye diseases and the need for early detection and treatment on the talk radio show Senior Agenda with Lisa Stockdale on February 27.
- On March 14, the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, trained their staff regarding the impact of the growth of vision loss, resources available to assist their clients and better understanding of eye diseases.
- Information regarding the impact of vision loss in Ohio was shared with legislators and their staff at an AEPPP Legislative Briefing on March 19.
- Dr. Andrew Hartwick from The Ohio State University College of Optometry and Stephanie Koscher from Prevent Blindness were interviewed on QFM96 regarding the Aging Eye Summit and glaucoma.
- On June 25, Northeast Ohio Medical University, the AEPPP and Prevent Blindness hosted a Summit entitled, “The Aging Eye: Putting Pressure on Glaucoma
- The Ohio Department of Aging STEADY U Ohio initiative, now in its second year, emphasizes the importance of healthy vision in fall prevention. See [steadyu.ohio.gov](http://steadyu.ohio.gov)

- Fellowships Awards were presented to Alicia Powers from The Ohio State University, Lucy Coughlin from Northeast Ohio Medical University, and Kate Farhang from the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cole Eye Institute, to support their vision related research. They presented their research at a scientific forum on Nov. 20, held at VSP. Dr. Julie Racine, keynote speaker, from Nationwide Children's Hospital, spoke about challenges for women in science.
- Vision care resources were provided to seniors who attended "Welcome to Medicare" events hosted by the Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) of the Ohio Department of Insurance.
- Prevent Blindness provided adult vision screening services and training for volunteers throughout the state.
- Healthy lifestyle evidenced-based programs that provide health benefits and promote disease prevention were made available through AEPPP partners the Ohio Departments of Aging and Health, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. Programs include HEALTHY U, a chronic disease self-management program, HEALTHY U: Diabetes, a diabetes self-management program, and Healthy IDEAS, depression self-management program.

## 2015:

- Hosted *The Aging Eye Summit: Shedding Light on Vision Loss* in conjunction with The Ohio State University College of Optometry and the Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness
- Presented Adult Vision Screening and EyeWatch training in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, and Toledo
- Offered a variety of evidenced-based healthy aging programs throughout the State that helped participants learn strategies to manage chronic disease, diabetes, depression, and the risk of falling
- Participated in awareness raising and educational activities such as radio and TV shows, Senior Day at The Ohio State Fair, and the Whitehouse Conference on Aging and as well as distributing social media and website postings
- A vision research Fellowship Award was presented to Karen Wai from the Cole Eye Institute where she also presented her findings to her peers at a Scientific Forum
- On behalf of the AEPPP, Bonnie K. Burman provided testimony to *the Institutes of Medicine Committee on Public Health Approaches to Reduce Vision Impairment and Promote Eye Health* in Washington DC., the work of which resulted in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division (NASEM) study "*Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow.*"

## 2016:

- Presented the Aging Eye Summit: Shedding Light on Vision Loss in conjunction with The Ohio State University College of Optometry and Prevent Blindness
- Conducted Adult Vision Screening and EyeWatch training in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton and Toledo
- Positioned evidenced-based chronic disease and injury prevention programs, such as HEALTHY U Ohio and STEADY U Ohio, as tools to combat vision loss and related health complications

- Provided vision screenings and information during the “Well Beyond 60!” Expo at the Ohio State fair
- Advocated during the White House Conference on Aging
- Awarded a vision research Fellowship to Karen Wai from the Cole Eye Institute, who presented her findings to her peers at a scientific forum
- In September 2016, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Health and Medicine Division (NASEM) released its study “*Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow.*” This report provides detail on the scope of vision problems, barriers to eye health and system-wide issues that are prevalent in the United States. It presents strategies that will reduce vision impairment and promote eye health, in an effort to slow a projected doubling of chronic vision impairment by 2050. The AEPPP was the only State collaborative asked to provide testimony to the committee. (To learn more about this report go to <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2016/making-eye-health-a-population-health-imperative-vision-for-tomorrow.aspx>.)
- The AEPPP joined with the Ohio Public Health Association’s Vision Care Section (OPHA VCS), 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 the 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 Association of Chronic Disease Directors and the Centers for Disease Control.

**2017:**

- Beverley L. Laubert, Interim Director of the Ohio Department of Aging, became Co-Chair of the AEPPP.
- “Aging Eye Summit: Vision for Tomorrow” in conjunction with Northeast Ohio Medical University
- Prevent Blindness provided 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.
- Provided educational and awareness activities related to vision health, including sharing recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s “*Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow*” study
- Awarded two Vision Research Fellowships who showcased their work at a Scientific Forum.
- Continued *Ohio’s Vision and Eye Health Initiative* led by the Ohio Department of Aging, partnering with the AEPPP, Ohio Public Health Association’s Vision Care Section, The Ohio State University College of Optometry, and the Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness, and funded by the CDC and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. 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 was one of three states to receive this funding. In addition to supporting the AEPPP overall activities, funds were used to:

- Support Ohio’s Aging Eye Public Private Partnership structure and activities
- Develop resources and volunteer training programs recognizing the nexus between vision and falls, train Matter of Balance coaches to conduct Adult Vision Screenings.
- Support inclusion of a series of vision questions in the 2018 BRFSS

- Support research by The Ohio State University College of Optometry to identify the impact of vision loss on Ohio and its residents.

- Produce a monthly e-newsletter for Adult Vision Screeners and HealthyEyes Advocates.

**2018:**

- Held a legislative event at the Ohio Statehouse to inform legislators and their staff about the impact and growth of aging eye diseases.
- Worked with Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program to provide senior eye health and access to insurance information for Medicare enrollees. Provided vision related information for their Welcome to Medicare programs.
- Presented two webinars for Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program Volunteers regarding aging eye diseases, access to care, and Medicare benefits for vision care.
- Held an Aging Eye Summit- *Understanding Vision Research: Hope for the Future* in conjunction with The Ohio State University Department of Ophthalmology. Over 15 speakers including patients, researchers, public health professionals, optometrists, and ophthalmologists spoke about developments in vision research especially targeted at glaucoma and AMD.
- Presented at the Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education annual conference regarding: *Using Data to Support Policy Development and Advocacy: A Vision and Eye Health Case Study*.
- Four vision research fellowships were awarded to students from The University of Akron, Case Western Reserve University, and The Ohio State University.