



# Prevent Blindness

Our Vision Is Vision.

*OUR MISSION: To Prevent Blindness and Preserve Sight*

*OUR VISION: Helping Ohioans Enjoy Good Sight for Life!*

Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate, founded in 1957, is Ohio's leading volunteer, nonprofit public health organization dedicated to *preventing blindness and preserving sight.*

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## Why our mission matters to you

An estimated **1.5 million** Ohioans are at risk for vision loss, **116,320** are visually impaired and **53,999** are legally blind. Vision is critical to conducting activities of daily living, is a portal for language and affects developmental learning, communicating, working, health and quality of life. Vision impairment is one of the most feared disabilities.

And while half of all blindness can be prevented and **90%** of all vision loss due to injury or accident is preventable, the number of Americans and Ohioans who suffer from vision loss continues to increase. Vision disorders and impairment are major public health problems. It is estimated that by **2030**, the number of blind and visually impaired people will **double** if nothing is done to curb this growth through prevention, early detection and treatment.

Blindness and visual impairment have an enormous impact on individuals and society. Vision loss can rob people of their independence, mobility and quality of life. A study by Prevent Blindness America shows that the annual economic costs of visual disorders and disabilities in the U.S. and Ohio are estimated to be **\$139 billion & \$5.4 billion** respectively.

## Leading causes of vision loss

In adults, the most common eye diseases are **cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration**. In children, serious eye disorders include **amblyopia "lazy eye" and strabismus "crossed eyes"**. Eye injuries in both adults and children at home, in the workplace, and in sports are also a leading cause of permanent visual impairment.

## Eye opening facts

- **Every 11 minutes** someone in the United States loses their vision.
- Vision disorders are the fourth most common disability in the U.S. and the most prevalent handicapping condition in childhood.
- **105,889** people in Ohio have **glaucoma** and half do not know it. Glaucoma causes the loss of peripheral or side vision. Once vision is lost, it cannot be restored.
- Diabetic Retinopathy is a common complication of diabetes which can lead to blindness. More than **900,000** Ohioans have **diabetes** and **284,631** suffer from this disease which involves abnormal growth of blood vessels in the back of the eye which can leak. Management of diabetes and regular preventative eye exams are the best defense against developing diabetic retinopathy.
- Approximately **43,400** Ohio preschool children (**1 in 20**) have a vision disorder such as amblyopia "lazy eye" or strabismus "crossed eyes" that can lead to loss of vision or even blindness.
- Nearly **508,000** Ohio school-aged children (**1 in 4**) have a vision problem. Abnormal visual acuity is the most common chronic medical condition in children of industrialized nations.
- There are nearly **4,000** serious eye injuries suffered by Ohio children ages 0-14 each year.
- More than **991,628** Ohioans over 40 years of age suffer from **cataracts** which is a clouding of the eye's naturally clear lens. This is usually treatable.
- **88,546** older Ohioans are afflicted with **age-related macular degeneration** which creates a loss of sharp, central vision. There is no cure and treatment is most successful when detected early.
- Vision problems have an impact of **\$5.4 billion annually** to the Ohio economy.

## **Programs and Services**

The Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness (PBO) is Ohio's leading volunteer nonprofit public health advocate for sight conservation. We promote eye health and safety while working to find the cure for blinding eye diseases. Our mission is carried out through:

### **Public Information**

Prevent Blindness supports public policies that advocate good eye health and safety for all Ohioans such as fireworks safety and access to comprehensive, professional vision care for Ohioans of all ages.

PBO offers workplace wellness programming, educational exhibits for museums and libraries, grades K-12 classroom lesson plans and speakers that provide eye health and safety facts to all ages to help them take good care of their gift of sight.

PBO offers a comprehensive selection of print and audio-visual materials dealing with all aspects of eye health and safety for use at home, work, school and leisure.

### **Research**

Prevent Blindness funds research by contributing to the Prevent Blindness National Investigator Awards and the Ohio Affiliate Student Fellowship Award for Female Scholars in Vision Research. Both grant programs provide support for scientific research investigating public health issues related to the burden of illness of eye-related health and safety. All research grants promote the core mission of Prevent Blindness preventing blindness and preserving sight.

### **Early Detection**

Early detection and prompt, professional treatment are essential in halting eye diseases such as amblyopia and glaucoma.

PBO's vision training and screening programs enable thousands of volunteers and providers of primary health care to detect potentially blinding eye diseases and refer individuals for professional treatment early, when it is most effective.

PBO's Vision Care Outreach program provides access to comprehensive donated eye care (eye exam, glasses and aftercare) for over 5,000 homeless and medically disadvantaged children and adults annually.

## **Governance and Leadership**

PBO's overall program standards and policies are developed by a volunteer board of directors representing the entire state of Ohio. Prevent Blindness is one of only 40 nonprofits among Ohio's 37,000+ nonprofit organizations to be awarded a "Standards for Excellence Seal" by the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations. Receipt of this award is based upon PBO's ethical business standards and accountability in program operations, governance, human resources, financial management and fundraising practices.



## ***Through the years...***

- 1908** Volunteers create Prevent Blindness when they learn that 30% of blindness in children can be prevented.
- 1917** Efforts lead to federal legislation that virtually eliminates the leading cause of blindness in newborns (ophthalmia neonatorum). Eye drops at birth are now standard procedure.
- 1926** Nationwide preschool vision screening program begins.
- 1930** First eye safety program for industry.
- 1948** The first Ohio Wise Owl Club charter at Herring-Hall-Marvin Safe Company in Hamilton promotes eye safety in the workplace.
- 1957** U.S. Senator John Bricker asks friends statewide to help create an Ohio affiliate of Prevent Blindness.
- 1958** First annual meeting of the Ohio affiliate.
- 1959** First Ohio Glaucoma Screening is conducted with the Lions Club.
- 1963** Ohio becomes the first state to pass a School Eye Safety Program, now adopted by most states.
- 1977** Glaucoma Alert Program launched. Southwest Ohio Chapter formed in Cincinnati. Northeast Ohio Chapter formed in Cleveland. Ohio Eye Care Coalition defeats fireworks bill.
- 1999** Save Our Sight Initiative, led by PBO with 20 partners, provides for a \$1 voluntary donation on Ohio motor vehicle registration to support children's vision services. Dayton office opens as satellite division of Southwest Ohio Chapter. Wise About Eyes, an interactive children's eye health and safety exhibit developed by PBO premieres at the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery in Dayton.
- 2000** Northwest Ohio Chapter Office opens in Toledo.
- 2002** Aging Eye Public Private Partnership formed by a proclamation from the Governor of Ohio.
- 2003** Ohio Legislative Task Force to Preserve Adult Vision formed with leadership from PBO, makes recommendations about curbing high risk vision loss among Ohio seniors.
- 2005** PBO creates the Young Investigator Student Fellowship Awards for Female Scholars in Vision Research.
- 2006** PBO celebrates its 50th Anniversary of "Helping Ohioans Enjoy Good Sight for Life!"
- 2007** Prevent Blindness National celebrates its 100th Anniversary.
- 2008** Prevent Blindness National named National Center for Children's Vision for Eye Health. PBO is selected as one of five pilot sites that will help to establish this program.
- 2010** EyeCAN advocacy program launched to widen access to eye care for all Americans.
- 2011** Children served by PBO with support from the SOS fund tops 5 million since the program began.
- 2012** PBO unveils "Vision Problems in Ohio" Interactive website. Fireworks Safety Campaign helps defeat Sight – Threatening Legislation.
- 2013** PBO chosen as pilot site by CDC for adult vision program.
- 2014** Dayton Office becomes Miami Valley Ohio Chapter. PBO creates AR\_Eye app that replicates virtual reality vision problems.
- 2015** PBO serves highest number of people ever – 1.4 million Ohioans.
- 2016** PBO responds to the coronavirus pandemic continuing all program services virtually.