Focusing on Ohio’s Vision

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

Report to the Governor, the Ohio General Assembly, and the Citizens of Ohio
Governor DeWine, Members of the Ohio General Assembly and Citizens of Ohio:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vision disability is one of the top ten disabilities among adults and causes a substantial social and economic toll for millions of people including significant suffering, disability, loss of productivity, and diminished quality of life.¹

An estimated 3.8 million Ohioans have vision problems and, as the population ages, this number will only increase. The impact of vision loss on the individual, his or her family, and Ohio is a significant public health concern. The estimated financial burden to the Ohio economy due to vision problems, refractive errors, visual impairment, and blindness is $6.1 billion annually (https://ohio.preventblindness.org/vision-problems-in-ohio/)

Reducing the incidence of vision loss in Ohio has been the aim of Ohio’s Aging Eye Public Private Partnership (AEPPPP) since its inception in 2003. The Partnership addresses issues relating to vision care public policy, vision care services, vision education, and vision research that impacts the quality of life for Ohio’s seniors now and in the future.

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.


Focusing on the Work of the AEPPPP:

- Provided Adult Vision Screening and HealthyEyes training in a live webinar format, as a self-paced on-line course as well as in-person. Participants were trained as vision health advocates and equipped to conduct adult vision screenings

- Offered virtual, evidence-based healthy aging programs that helped participants learn strategies to manage diabetes, depression, and the risk of falling;

- Three Vision Research Fellowships were awarded in April. The Fellows presented their cutting edge work at the Vision Research Scientific Forum in November.

- Participated in the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors Vision and Eye Health Initiative. The initiative aims to improve vision and eye health through interventions that advance vision and eye health as public health priorities.

- Held a Legislative Briefing and provided all Ohio legislators with a packet of eye health resources that are useful in assisting their constituents.

- Hosted a virtual Aging Eye Summit in conjunction with the Prevent Blindness National Summit which featured leaders in vision research from Case Western Reserve University, The Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati as well as a session specifically focused on Ohio’s Aging Eye Public Private Partnership and reducing vision loss in Ohio. Participants from all over the world joined Ohio’s Summit for the first time.

Co-Chair
Rafat R. Ansari, Ph.D., Fellow SPIE
NASA Senior Scientist (retired)
Vision Research and Human Health Diagnostics
Laboratory NASA John H. Glenn Research Center
2021 Fellowship Recipients

Alyssa L. Hubal, from Case Western Reserve University Pathology, Immunology Training Program, is studying the effects of a combination treatment for ocular toxoplasmosis.

Rebecca Deffler from The Ohio State University College of Optometry is studying newly-licensed bioptic drivers and methods to improve safety after licensure.

Megan Allyn from the Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Department at The Ohio State University is studying treatment for age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Statistics from the 2020 Vision Problems in Ohio report indicate increases in the four leading causes of vision loss in Ohio since the 2014 report was issued.

- 97,870 people age 50 and older have age-related macular degeneration—a 10.5% increase
- 1,025,422 people age 40 and older have cataract—a 3.4% increase
- 294,742 people age 40 and older have diabetes-related retinopathy—a 3.5% increase
- 109,556 people age 40 and older have glaucoma—a 3.5% increase

Early detection and treatment are key to preserving sight. Many eye diseases have no symptoms and require a comprehensive eye exam to detect. In most cases, once vision is lost, it cannot be restored. However, treatment can stop or slow the progression of the disease.

Thank You to a Visionary, Dr. Rafat Ansari

In 2002, the Fourth Edition of Vision Problems in the US was released in conjunction with a press conference and a vision symposium featuring vision researchers from across the United States. Dr. Rafat Ansari from the NASA Glenn Research Center in Ohio was in attendance at the conference along with Sherry Williams the then President & CEO of the Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness. This report underscored the fact that vision problems are a growing concern for the nation’s aging population.

Armed with this information, the Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness, with the encouragement and assistance of Dr. Ansari, convened a coalition of several large and diverse statewide organizations – both public and private - that shared a common interest of preventing vision loss. This group came together to plan a conference entitled “Ohio’s Vision…Awaken to the Challenge;” which was held at the Ohio Aerospace Institute on April 23, 2003. The conference attracted individuals from state government, eye care, long-term care, universities, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations that served seniors in Ohio. The conference concluded with the formation of an on-going statewide collaboration of organizations to continue work preparing for future vision needs of Ohio’s aging population—Ohio’s Aging Eye Public Private Partnership. Dr. Ansari led the way in the formation of the Aging Eye Partnership and has been the Co-chair of the Partnership for many years. We thank him for always Focusing on Ohio’s Vision and his dedication, as he retires from the leadership of the AEPPPP.
Financial Support

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