

Preserving Our Vision



Report to the Governor, the Ohio General Assembly, and the Citizens of Ohio



Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership

A statewide collaboration preparing for the
growth of aging eye challenges in Ohio

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

As you can imagine, vision-related disability is one of the top ten disabilities among adults in the United States and causes a substantial social and economic toll for millions of people including significant suffering, disability, loss of productivity, and diminished quality of life.

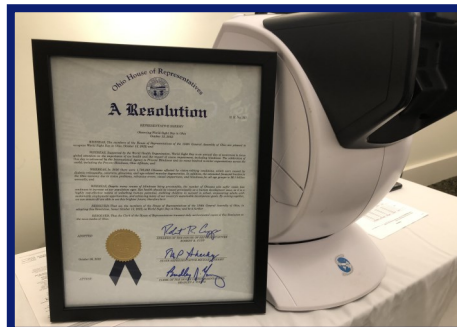
An estimated 3.8 million Ohioans have vision problems and, as the population ages, this number will only increase. The impact of vision loss on the individual, his or her family, and Ohio is a significant public health concern. The estimated financial burden to the Ohio economy due to vision problems,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

We are excited to share our newly developed *Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership Strategic Plan* in this report! As you will note, the mission of Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership is to implement a plan of action to address issues encompassing vision care and preservation, rehabilitation services, vision-related public health and policy, education and awareness, and 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.

The Work of the AEPPP:

- Revitalized the membership of the AEPPP and developed a Strategic Plan of Action and Objectives that are timely and actionable. (page 3)
- Offered virtual, evidence-based healthy aging programs that helped participants learn strategies to manage diabetes, depression, and the risk of falling.
- Hosted an Aging Eye Summit in conjunction with The Ohio State University, College of Optometry. Topics included: Barriers to Vision Care in Ohio, Disparities in Eye Care, Patient Perspectives, Differences in Ocular Biomechanics between Races – Implications for Glaucoma as well as iOS for Low Vision.
- Provided Adult Vision Screening and HealthyEyes trainings in person as well as through trainings held via live webinar and self-paced on-line formats. Participants were trained as vision health advocates and were provided the equipment needed to conduct adult vision screenings.
- Three Young Investigator Student Fellowship Awards for Female Scholars in Vision Research were granted in April. The Fellows presented their innovative work at the Vision Research Scientific Forum in November. (page 3)
- Participated in the Vision Health Initiative at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 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.



2022 Vision Research Fellowship Recipients

Archana Murali (top L) - Case Western Reserve University Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences

Immunoblot Analysis of Lymphatic Marker Expression in Human Ciliary Body Cells Following Prostaglandin Analog Treatment.



Erica Shelton (top R) - The Ohio State University College of Optometry

Assessing Social Determinants of Health in the Pediatric Population's Utilization of Vision Care Services using Data from the National Survey of Children's Health.

Olivia Taylor - The Ohio State University Department of Neurology

Exploring Sphingosine 1 Phosphate as a Mediator of Retinal Regeneration via Epigenetic Regulation of Muller Glia Reprogramming.



Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership Strategic Plan

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Vision-Related Public Health & Policy

- Integrate adult vision messaging and strategies into state and local health improvement planning.
- Advocate for coverage of comprehensive vision care and rehabilitation services for adults in Medicaid and Medicare programs.
- Advocate for the development and expansion of comprehensive vision care and rehabilitation services within community health centers, including federally qualified health centers.
- Advocate for affordable health insurance coverage of early disease detection, comprehensive vision care, and rehabilitation services.

Education & Awareness

- Educate others about how they can provide access to vision care and rehabilitation services for their clients.
- Increase awareness about the growth of vision problems amongst Ohio's aging population.
- Support early detection and treatment efforts for chronic diseases that impact vision and eye health.

Research

- Support efforts that increase evidence-based vision screening practices as well as access to vision care and rehabilitation services.
- Promote best practices for seniors in maintaining healthy vision.
- Support efforts that eliminate health disparities in vision and rehabilitation services.

Vision Care, Preservation & Rehabilitation Services

- Support and advocate for inclusion of vision questions in Ohio and national data collection tools to provide outcome data on which to base statewide public health vision programming.
- Support vision-related activities that promote awareness, collaboration, and expansion of research.



Common Causes of Visual Impairment and Blindness in Ohio

- 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.



Vision Problems in Ohio Data: <https://ohio.preventblindness.org/vision-problems-in-ohio/>

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The Vision Research Fellowship Program is supported by the Sarah E. Slack Prevention of Blindness Fund, Muskingum County Community Foundation and the Vision Health Initiative at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership Leadership

Co-Chairs

Ursel J. McElroy, MPA
Director, Ohio Department of Aging

Marcus J. Molea, AICP, MHA
Board Chair, Prevent Blindness Ohio

Advocacy and Awareness Co-Chairs

Jackie Davis, OD, MPH
Professor, College of Optometry
The Ohio State University

Marcus J. Molea, AICP, MHA
Board Chair, Prevent Blindness Ohio

Vision Research Chair

Andrew Hartwick, OD, PhD
Assistant Professor
College of Optometry
The Ohio State University

Member Organizations

Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education
Ohio Association of Senior Centers
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

AEPPP membership also includes additional representatives from higher education, federally qualified health centers, vision research, and allied health professionals.