



# Vision Problems in Ohio

## *Prevalence of Adult Vision Impairment and Age-Related Eye Disease in Ohio*

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Half of all vision loss is preventable, and yet as Ohio's population ages, the incidence of visual impairment and blindness continues to grow. In fact, **the number of Ohioans whose vision will be affected by age-related eye diseases is expected to double by the year 2030 impacting nearly 2.5 million Ohioans!** The most common causes of vision loss are: age-related macular degeneration, cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Policymakers and communities must stay informed about the state and local impact of vision loss, but also about important advances in research, treatment and implement preventive strategies. The best prevention is through early detection- regular comprehensive eye exams.

### **Who is at Risk?**

Vision problems affect everyone! Survey data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System conducted by the Ohio Department of Health indicates that glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (AMD) affect nearly twice as many Ohioans as previous national estimates. Vision problems disproportionately affect certain racial and ethnic groups, with African Americans four times more likely to have glaucoma than Caucasians, and Caucasians more likely than other racial groups to develop AMD.

Health habits and chronic disease can increase the incidence of eye disease too. For example, smoking, diabetes, and previous eye injuries increase the likelihood of age-related eye disease. Additional data indicates that vision loss is directly related to increased incidence of depression and poor health image.

### **What is the cost to Ohio?**

A study completed in 2007 shows **vision problems cost Ohio almost \$2 billion annually.** This amount is determined through analysis of direct medical costs, other direct costs, such as nursing home care and government programs, as well as lost productivity. Costs to the individual include medical care expenditures, informal care costs and health utility loss. If appropriate steps are not taken, this cost estimate is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years as Ohio's 3.1 million baby boomers reach retirement age and beyond.

Families are paying a lot in costs associated with eye diseases too— and the cost is not only financial. What's often not talked about is the bigger toll that vision loss takes on families. Many people and their loved ones feel at a loss following diagnosis of a vision problem. A new American Federation for the Blind poll shows vision loss is the health condition Americans fear most because they worry it means loss of independence.



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**Vision Problems in Ohio, the 2008 update to the Fourth Edition, provides useful estimates of the prevalence of sight-threatening eye diseases in Ohioans age 40 and older, economic impact of eye diseases, and other demographic data on a statewide and county level. For further information on the data and statistics used in this fact sheet please refer to the following sources:**

- *Vision Problems in the U.S., 2008 Update to the Fourth Edition;*
- *The Economic Impact of Vision Problems: The Toll of Major Adult Eye Disorders, Visual Impairment and Blindness on the Economy;*
- Ohio Department of Health and the 2005-6 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (CDC); and
- U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for 2004 and 2006



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# Vision Problems in Ohio: Burden and Scope of Age-Related Eye Disease in Licking County

The number of Ohio residents with impaired vision, including blindness, could more than **double** by the year 2030. By taking steps now to prevent and treat vision problems, policymakers can reduce vision loss, improve quality of life and lessen the economic impact of vision loss in Ohio.

More than 43,000 Ohioans are legally blind, and thousands more suffer from debilitating eye diseases and conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Many racial groups and populations suffering from chronic diseases are at greater risk for blinding eye conditions. For example, African Americans age 40-49 are nearly four times more likely to have glaucoma than Caucasians of the same age. Ohioans with diabetes are at great risk for developing diabetic retinopathy but are also twice as likely to develop glaucoma and 45% more likely to develop cataracts than those without diabetes.



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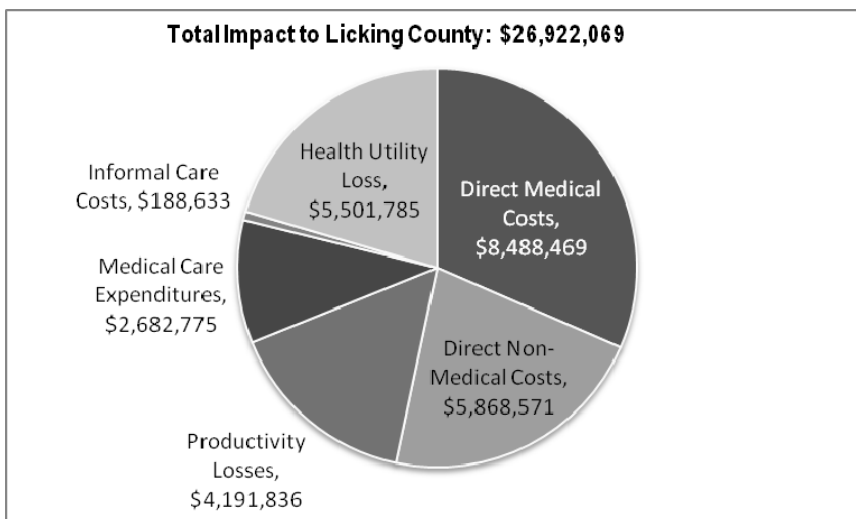
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| Licking County Population<br><i>(based on 2004 Census data)</i> | Total | Male | Female | White | Black | Other | Hispanic |
|---|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Visual Impairment, including<br>Blindness (est. cases): Age 40+ | 1971  | 674  | 1293   | 1932  | 34    | 36    | 7        |
| Blindness (est. cases): Age 40+                                 | 577   | 210  | 367    | 544   | 14    | 10    | 1        |
| Myopia: Age 40+   | 18545 | 8523 | 10015  | 18985 | 199   | 164   | 67       |
| Age-related Macular Degeneration:<br>Age 50+                    | 799   | 263  | 536    | 828   | 8     | 3     | 1        |
| Cataract: Age 40+   | 12556 | 4862 | 7655   | 12588 | 186   | 107   | 40       |
| Diabetic Retinopathy: Age 40+                                   | 2280  | 1120 | 1159   | 2116  | 55    | 30    | 20       |
| Glaucoma: Age 40+   | 1246  | 490  | 756    | 1082  | 47    | 16    | 5        |

## The Economic Impact of Vision Problems in Licking County\*

\*(Access the full *Economic Impact of Vision Problems* report at: [www.preventblindness.org/research](http://www.preventblindness.org/research))



Total Economic Impact to Ohio:  
**\$1.98 billion**

Total Economic Impact to Licking County:  
**\$26.9 million**

Current cost of vision problems per resident of Licking County (age 40+):  
**\$383**

Total number of Licking County residents currently affected by vision problems:  
**37,397**

Estimated number of Licking County residents affected by the year 2030:  
**74,794**

**Sources:** *Vision Problems in the U.S., 2008 Update to the Fourth Edition; The Economic Impact of Vision Problems: The Toll of Major Adult Eye Disorders, Visual Impairment and Blindness on the Economy;* Ohio Department of Health and the 2005-6 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (CDC); and U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for 2004 and 2006