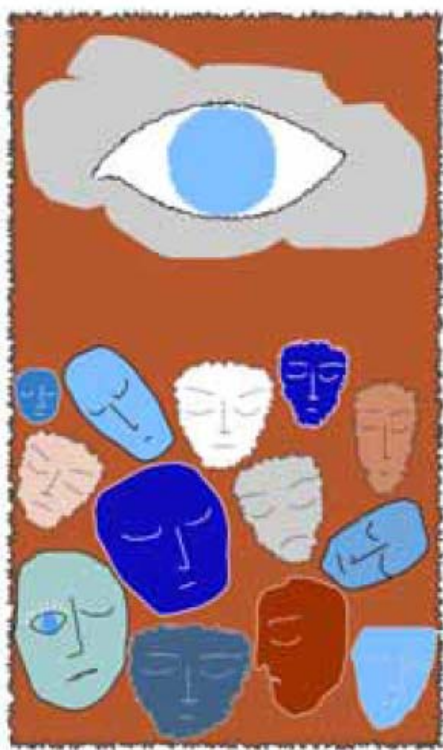


Vision Problems in Ohio

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



2008 Update to the Fourth Edition



Prevent Blindness Ohio . . . Our Mission is to Prevent Blindness and Preserve Sight

For more than 50 years, Prevent Blindness Ohio has been Ohio's leading volunteer nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. PBO was founded in 1957 by U.S. Senator John Bricker and Lion's Club Member Bob Morrison with support from Nationwide, the Ohio Department of Health and Delta Gamma Fraternity. PBO's staff and volunteers are proud to serve all 88 Ohio counties. We provide direct services to more than 800,000 Ohioans annually and educate millions of consumers about what they can do to protect and preserve their precious gift of sight. Prevent Blindness Ohio is an affiliate of Prevent Blindness America, the country's second-oldest national voluntary health organization.

Prevent Blindness Ohio is the state's leading consumer advocate for eye health and safety. Our goal is to prevent the 50% of vision loss that is needless and help all Ohioans enjoy good sight for life!



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Half of all blindness is preventable, and yet as the population ages, the incidence of visual impairment and blindness continues to grow in Ohio. In fact, the number of Ohioans with visual impairment is expected to double by 2030. Nearly 150,000 Ohioans currently suffer from visual impairment, and more than 43,000 are blind. Many thousands more face the quality of life and economic issues associated with specific aging eye diseases, including glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Policymakers and communities must stay informed about the state and local impact of vision loss, but also about important advances in research, treatment and prevention. *Vision Problems in Ohio*, the 2008 update to the 4th edition, provides useful information about the prevalence of vision loss and impairment in Ohio and all 88 counties. In this edition, you will find the latest information about eye disease and conditions based on updated census information that reflects changes in Ohio's population in terms of race, sex and ethnicity.

Common causes of visual impairment and blindness*

Vision impairment is defined as having 20/40 or worse in the better, even with eyeglasses.

Blindness is defined as visual acuity with best correction in the better eye worse than or equal to 20/200 or a visual field extent of less than 20 degrees in diameter.

Myopia is the same as nearsightedness.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration creates a loss of sharp, central vision. No successful treatment is currently available.

Cataract is a clouding of the eye's naturally clear lens. This is usually treatable.

Diabetic Retinopathy 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.

Glaucoma causes the loss of peripheral or side vision. Once vision is lost, it cannot be restored; however, further loss of remaining vision can usually be prevented with treatment.

Vision Loss in Ohio

A recent national survey indicated that glaucoma and 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. Smoking and eye injuries also increase the likelihood of age-related eye disease, and data indicates that vision loss is directly related to increased incidence of depression and poor health image. Awareness of the value of preventive eye care, cost and a lack of insurance are significant barriers to the treatment and prevention of eye disease. Less than half of eligible Ohioans are aware that Medicare will cover medical eye care expenses.

Economic Impact of Vision Problems

The **estimated annual financial burden of vision loss** to the Ohio economy due to adult vision problems, refractive errors, visual impairment and blindness is **\$1.98 billion**.

Direct medical costs refer to outpatient and inpatient services, prescription drugs and other medications used by people with AMD, cataract diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma or refractive error. **Direct non-medical costs** include nursing home care due to visual impairment, government programs for the visually impaired and guide dogs. **Lost productivity** refers to lower labor force participation and lower wages among people who are visually impaired or blind.

Annual excess monetary impact to individuals with visual impairment and blindness, caregivers and other healthcare payers is estimated at **\$617 million**.

Medical care expenditures include costs associated with doctor visits, home care, medical supplies and hospital stays. ***Informal care costs*** refer to unpaid care provided by friends and family. ***Health utility*** evaluates quality of life lost due to chronic medical conditions.

*For more information about visual impairment and eye diseases, please refer to the glossary at the end of this document.