



Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership

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

OHIO'S AGING EYE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP RECOGNIZES VISION CHAMPIONS IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COLUMBUS (October 7, 2009)-Several members of the Ohio General Assembly were recognized for helping improve the vision health of Ohio's seniors at Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership's Legislative Briefing on September 23, 2009.

State Representative Kathleen Chandler (D-Kent), a member of the Partnership since its inception in 2003 said "the work of the Partnership is important to the people in my district and the people of Ohio. Half of all vision impairment and blindness can be prevented through early detection and timely treatment."

Representatives Barbara Boyd (D-Cleveland) and Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green) were recognized for sponsoring HB 81-The Diabetes Cost Reduction Act which would require certain health care policies to provide benefits for equipment, supplies, and medication for the diagnosis, treatment, and management of diabetes and for diabetes self-management education. People with diabetes are at a higher risk for developing many vision problems including glaucoma, cataract and approximately 40% of Americans with diabetes develop diabetic retinopathy which involves abnormal growth of blood vessels in the back of the eye which can leak resulting in loss of vision.

Representative Tom Letson (D-Warren) was recognized for introducing HB 106 which designates March 2010 as Macular Degeneration Awareness (AMD) month which will raise awareness about the leading cause of visual impairment among those ages 50 and older. Age-Related Macular Degeneration creates a loss of sharp central vision. It is a serious eye disease that affects the vision of more than 1.5 million Americans and over 92,000 Ohioans. AMD robs people of their central vision and often the ability to read a book, recognize a face, drive an automobile, see fine details, or distinguish some colors..

Co-Chairs of Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership, Barbara E. Riley, Director of the Ohio Department of Aging and Robert D. Newcomb, OD, Professor of Clinical Optometry at The Ohio State University College of Optometry educated those in attendance about the scope and financial burden of age-related eye diseases and encouraged lawmakers to:

- Support the Diabetes Cost Reduction Act
- Maintain adult vision benefits in Ohio Medicaid
- Support measures that increase vision screening practices among providers of primary health care.
- Promote programs and policies that emphasize chronic disease prevention and widen access to health care including vision care for all Ohioans.

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Members of Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership, including Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission-Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Insurance-Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program, and Prevent Blindness Ohio, described services available to assist Ohioans in maintaining healthy vision and other vision related services.

Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership (AEPPP) is a statewide collaboration formed to respond to the growth aging eye challenges in Ohio. The mission of the AEPPP, an initiative supported by the Ohio Department of Aging, is to develop a strategic plan of action to address issues relating to vision care public policy, vision care services, vision education, and vision research that impact the quality of life for Ohio's seniors now and in the future.

Members of the Aging Eye Public Private Partnership are: Association of Philanthropic Homes for the Aging, Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, Council for Older Adults, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education, Ohio Agencies Serving the Visually Impaired, Ohio Department of Aging, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Insurance, Representative Kathleen Chandler, Ohio Ophthalmological Society, Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Ohio Osteopathic Association, Ohio Optometric Association, VA Health Care System of Ohio - VISN 10, Opticians Association of Ohio and Prevent Blindness Ohio.

Visit our website at www.preventblindness.org/ohio/agingeye or call 1-800-301-2020.



Barbara E. Riley, co-chair of Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership recognizes Representatives Barbara Boyd and Randy Gardner as "Vision Champions" for sponsoring the Diabetes Cost Reduction Act.



Representative Kathleen Chandler, Robert D. Newcomb OD-The Ohio State University, and Barbara E. Riley, Director of the Ohio Department of Aging urge Ohio Legislators to stay informed about the impact of vision loss on health care and long term care costs as well as the quality of life.