



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS ON OHIO'S VISION ISSUES** **Aging Eye Public/Private Partnership calls for awareness of threats to vision**

**COLUMBUS** – Statewide organizations from the public and private sector met September 24 to begin work on a strategic plan of action to address eye issues.

“The goal of Ohio’s Aging Eye Public/Private Partnership is to raise awareness of this important health issue for Ohioans,” said Director Joan Lawrence, of the Ohio Department of Aging and co-chair of the group.

“As a state we must be informed so that we can prepare for the early detection, treatment and rehabilitation services that will be needed,” said Dr. Robert Newcomb, co-chair of the Aging Eye Public/Private Partnership.

More Ohioans than ever are facing the threat of blindness from age-related eye disease. The number of Ohio seniors affected by these diseases is expected to double over the next 30 years as the Baby Boomer generation ages, largely resulting from the eye diseases of diabetic retinopathy, cataract, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). More than 2.5 million Ohioans will be affected.

The Partnership discussed ways to address 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. The formation of the Partnership and its on-going work is supported by a Proclamation from Governor Bob Taft.

Other members of the 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 Council for Home Care, Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education, Ohio Agencies Serving the Visually Impaired, NASA Glenn Research Center, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Insurance, Representative Kathleen Chandler, Ohio Nurses Association, Ohio Ophthalmological Society, Senator Steve Stivers, Senator Randy Gardner, Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, Ohio Osteopathic Association, Ohio Optometric Association, Ohio Veterans Visual Impairment Services Team, Opticians Association of Ohio and Prevent Blindness Ohio.

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