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**EYE DISEASE CONTINUING TO  
INCREASE AMONG OHIO RESIDENTS**  
*Latest Data Shows Number of Eye Disease Patients Rising*

**COLUMBUS, OH** – Millions of Americans are currently living with age-related eye disease and, according to the latest research from Prevent Blindness America and the National Eye Institute, that number is continuing to climb. With more than 130 million Americans aged 40 and older, more than 30 million suffer from leading causes of vision loss such as cataract, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration and glaucoma, according to the newly revised edition of the “Vision Problems in the U.S.” study. And, residents of Ohio are no exception.

The study was updated from the 2002 Vision Problems in the U.S. report on the prevalence of eye diseases and conditions in America. Information gathered was the result of data collection from a systematic review of the major epidemiological studies from leading ophthalmologic epidemiologists.

Revised data from the Vision Problems in the U.S. study showed that among Ohio residents aged 40 and older:

- Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) cases rose 25 percent, the largest increase of the major eye diseases. Currently, 2 million Americans have been diagnosed with AMD and 92,504 people in Ohio have it.
- Diabetic retinopathy affects more than 4.4 million Americans and 171,467 people in Ohio. As the diabetes epidemic rages on, the number of cases of the disease will continue to soar.
- There are 93,852 adults in Ohio with glaucoma, the sneak thief of sight. Yet twice as many more are estimated to have the disease and do not know it.
- Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in the world and 22.3 million American adults have the disease, including 945,043 people in Ohio. Although surgery can be highly successful, not all Americans are fortunate enough to have access to affordable care.

“Our research shows that vision loss continues to threaten the quality of life for millions of Americans,” said Sherill Williams, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Ohio. “Our challenge continues to be education, whether it be convincing the public to practice regular eye care or by convincing our government leaders that millions of precious healthcare dollars can be saved through prevention services”.

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## **New Research Shows Eye Disease Continuing to Threaten Healthy Vision**

### **Page 2**

As the baby boomer population continues to age, the number of those who are visually impaired is expected to double by 2030. And, from an economic perspective, the annual costs associated with adult vision problems in the United States are \$51.4 billion and nearly \$2 billion in Ohio. Research from Prevent Blindness America's 2007 "Economic Impact of Vision Problems: The Toll of Major Adult Eye Disorders, Visual Impairment, and Blindness on the U.S. Economy," totaled the financial costs of vision conditions to individuals and their caregivers, and the impact on the economy.

"The good news is that in most cases, the effects of eye disease can be minimized through early detection and treatment," added Williams. "We strongly urge everyone to make an appointment with their eye care professional today to help protect their sight!"

For more information on eye disease or to receive a copy of the 2008 Vision Problems in the U.S. report, please call Prevent Blindness Ohio at 800-301-2020 or visit [www.pbohio.org](http://www.pbohio.org).

*Prevent Blindness Ohio, founded in 1957, is Ohio's leading volunteer nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. We serve all 88 Ohio counties, providing direct services to more than 800,000 Ohioans annually and educating 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. For more information or to make a contribution, visit our website at [www.pbohio.org](http://www.pbohio.org) or call 800-301-2020.*

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