

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DELEGATES SELECTED FOR
PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA'S THIRD ANNUAL
EYES ON CAPITOL HILL EVENT**

CHICAGO (Feb. 1, 2008) – Prevent Blindness America, the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, is pleased to announce that more than 70 applicants have been selected as delegates for the "Eyes on Capitol Hill" campaign to be held in Washington, DC. Delegates will represent more than 20 states across the country. The event will be held Feb. 12-14, 2008.

Eyes on Capitol Hill is a program designed to give constituents who have been affected by vision loss an opportunity to discuss vision issues with their respective government representatives. In addition, delegates will also learn how to become effective advocates for vision health in their own state after returning home.

Prevent Blindness America and its affiliates encouraged citizens to share their personal stories of vision issues with the organization. After hundreds of essay submissions, a volunteer review committee awarded scholarships to cover travel, meal and hotel expenses for more than 70 participants. Those selected are allowed to bring a sighted guide and/or chaperone if visually impaired, or a parent or guardian if the delegate is a child. Applicants who were not provided a scholarship were also invited to participate at their own expense.

"As we enter in a period of potential economic slowdown, we need to educate our nation's leaders on the importance of cost-effective funding for vision care programs and initiatives," said Daniel D. Garrett, senior vice president of Prevent Blindness America. "Half of all blindness is preventable but our citizens must have access to those blindness prevention services."

Vision care expenses continue to skyrocket. In fact, according to a recent study from Prevent Blindness America, the annual estimated cost associated with adult vision diseases in the United States is \$51.4 billion. That figure includes both direct and indirect costs associated with the most common forms of vision impairments such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and refractive error.

For more information on Eyes on Capitol Hill or other vision topics, call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020 or visit www.preventblindness.net/eoch.

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About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screenings, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, it's committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020 or visit us on the Web at www.preventblindness.org.