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**PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA SELECTS LOCAL
DELEGATES FOR FOURTH ANNUAL
EYES ON CAPITOL HILL NATIONAL EVENT**

Residents of Philadelphia and Province, Pa. Chosen to Participate

CHICAGO (Feb. 25, 2009) – Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s leading volunteer eye health and safety organization, is pleased to announce that two applicants from Pennsylvania have been selected as delegates for the fourth annual “Eyes on Capitol Hill” campaign to be held in Washington, DC. Bradford J. Putt and Beth Hogan Quigley will join more than 70 other participants from across the country to meet with congressional and senate members and their staff to discuss vision care issues. The event will be held March 2-4, 2009.

Through a nationwide search for applicants, adults and children whose lives have been impacted by either eye disease or eye injuries were selected. The goal of the program is to demonstrate to our nation’s leaders the importance of vision care funding initiatives. Specifically, Eyes on Capitol Hill advocates will ask congressional and senate members, including Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA), to increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Vision Health Initiative and to join the Congressional Vision Caucus (CVC). The CVC is a bicameral and bipartisan coalition of more than 100 Congressional Members focused on vision research, prevention/public health programs, and access to treatment and rehabilitation.

Pennsylvania delegates include Bradford J. Putt of Philadelphia, who is going to Washington to speak to his representatives about how his father’s life has changed since his diagnosis with the wet form of age-related macular degeneration.

“With an increasing aging population, it is imperative to act quickly to help people with age-related conditions stay vital and productive in their senior years,” said Putt. “Baby boomers, in particular, want and need to be an important part of any community; the less barriers there are, especially poor health, the better able we are to contribute.”

Also participating from Pennsylvania is Beth Hogan Quigley of Province. As a nurse practitioner, educator and vision screener, she is on the front lines of providing healthcare services to the public. Hogan Quigley has witnessed firsthand her own mother’s battle with cataracts and glaucoma and the devastating effects it has had on her vision.

She hopes to tell her congressmen that “education is the key to prevention. Health promotion and disease prevention are the cornerstones to healthcare. In

the long run, the money used for prevention will save many more dollars in treating eye diseases in the future.”

Of the 130 million Americans aged 40 and older, more than 30 million suffer from leading causes of vision loss such as cataract, glaucoma, AMD and diabetic retinopathy, according to the newly revised edition of the Prevent Blindness America’s “Vision Problems in the U.S.” study. In fact, in Pennsylvania alone, 1,176,500 have already been diagnosed with cataracts, more than 112,000 with glaucoma, more than 121,000 with AMD and 200,754 with diabetic retinopathy.

“As our healthcare system faces the effects of the broader economic downturn, it is critical that we make sure our representatives are aware of the impact that vision loss can have,” added Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “Our nation spends at least \$51.4 billion a year on the costs of age-related eye disease alone. We want to stress the need for public access to preventive services and vision health programs.”

For more information on Eyes on Capitol Hill or on how you can contact your state representative to ask for their support on vision-related issues, call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org.

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 screening and training, 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 (800) 331-2020 or visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org.

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