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## **PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA RECEIVES GRANT FROM MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH BUREAU**

***- Grant Provides Essential Funds to Create National Center to Assure Eye Care  
for Young Children -***

**Chicago (Aug. 18, 2009)** – Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s oldest volunteer eye health and safety organization, has been awarded a multi-year grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), a bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Prevent Blindness America will use the funds to establish the National Universal Vision Screening for Young Children Coordinating Center, that will promote and ensure a continuum of eye care for young children within the healthcare system.

The Center will focus on:

- Providing national leadership in the development of the statewide vision screenings and eye health programs for all children prior to entering school
- Developing and implementing a plan to assist states in coordinating existing vision screening activities
- Collaboration with the states of Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Ohio to develop and implement a statewide strategy for universal vision screening, data collection and creation of a standardized performance measure for vision screening

Prevent Blindness America will also establish a National Expert Panel on Young Children’s Vision Screening as part of this groundbreaking grant award. The Panel will include representatives from the fields of ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics and public health. This panel will also serve as an expert advisory panel to the National Coordinating Center.

According to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 12.1 million school-age children have some form of vision problem, yet only one in three children in America have received eye care services before the age of 6. The National Eye Institute reports that the most prevalent and

significant vision disorders of preschool children are amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (crossed eyes) and significant refractive error.

“Our children are our most important asset and we want to ensure that every child in America has been given the opportunity to succeed academically by being able to see clearly as they start school,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “Through this generous grant for the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, we can create and implement programs that will help to place our children on a path to a lifetime of healthy vision.”

For more information on children’s vision health and safety or what you can do to help advocate for children’s vision and eye health, please call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or visit [preventblindness.org](http://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, Prevent Blindness America is 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](http://preventblindness.org).

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