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New Report from Prevent Blindness Reveals Annual Costs Related to Eye Disease to Reach \$717 Billion by 2050

- Data Shows Staggering Projected Increases in Eye Disease Cases, Direct Health-related Costs -

CHICAGO (June 18, 2014) – As the U.S. population ages, the number of those with eye disease and vision problems will continue to spiral upward. A new report released by Prevent Blindness, "[The Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems](#)," predicts more than \$384 billion in 2032 and \$717 billion in 2050 in nominal costs related to eye disease and vision problems.

Statistics from the report – commissioned from researchers at NORC at the University of Chicago – point to some alarming projections, including:

- Costs related to eye disease, including government, insurance and patient costs, are projected to increase 376 percent by 2050
- Hispanics are projected to exhibit extremely high growth in diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and cataract cases.
- As the baby-boomer generation ages into the Medicare program, costs will further shift from patients and private insurance to government. By 2050, government will pay more than 41 percent of costs, while the burden paid by patients and private insurers will drop to 44 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

- Women will continue to outnumber men in prevalence of all eye disease and vision loss categories except for diabetic retinopathy.
- Those aged 90 and older are projected to be by far the fastest growing population segment, with their population more than tripling due to both the aging baby-boomers and increasing longevity. This will have a significant effect on those living with eye disease, as many of these conditions are age-related.
- The estimated average age of AMD patients is 80 years old, the oldest of any of the included eye diseases. Diabetic retinopathy patients have an average age of 66 years, the youngest of any of the included eye diseases.

Data from the 2014 Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems also includes:

- Forecasts of vision-related disease by disorder, race, age and sex
- A breakdown of projected costs of eye disorders and vision loss from the perspective of three payers: government, private insurance and patients and their families.

The Future of Vision study results were derived using data culled from the [2012 Vision Problems in the U.S. report](#), the [2013 Cost of Vision Problems: The Economic Burden of Vision Loss and Eye Disorders in the United States study](#) and the U.S. Census Bureau population projections.

An overview of the new report will be presented today by the author, John Wittenborn, at the third annual Prevent Blindness “Focus on Eye Health National Summit” taking place at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. from 7:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. This year’s Summit will provide education and discussion on issues and conditions that co-exist with vision problems. Rear Admiral (RADM) Boris D. Lushniak, M.D., M.P.H., the Acting United States Surgeon General, will provide opening remarks regarding the damaging effects of smoking on vision and overall health.

“We cannot stand by and passively accept vision loss as an inevitable condition of growing old,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “The sheer numbers of those who are and will be personally and financially impacted by vision impairment and blindness is far too great to ignore. The time to plan and develop a national strategy for saving sight is now.”

For more information about the Prevent Blindness Future of Vision report, the Focus on Eye Health National Summit, or other vision-related topics, please visit preventblindness.org or call (800) 331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness 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 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, Prevent Blindness 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 or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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