



Eye on Health

American Academy Of Ophthalmology Announces New Drive For Thousands To Get Diabetic Eye Exam

(NAPSA)—Diabetes causes more new cases of legal blindness among working-age Americans than any other disease. If diabetes are monitored regularly by their ophthalmologist, this vision loss is almost always avoidable. Yet, tragically, more than half of all people living with diabetes do not get the recommended annual dilated eye exam. As the number of people with type 2 diabetes rises in the U.S., the CDC projects that the number of adults with diabetic retinopathy will double by the year 2050. Yet 90 percent of diabetic eye disease can be prevented simply by proper regular examinations and treatment and by controlling blood sugar.

This November, during Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month, the American Academy of Ophthalmology (Academy) through its EyeSmart™ campaign, is reminding the public that an annual dilated eye exam can help prevent vision loss in people with diabetes. To promote awareness of the need for an annual eye exam, the Academy has launched EyeSmart: EyeCommitted, a social media campaign to encourage people with diabetes to pledge to get an annual eye exam.

"Diabetes can have a devastating impact on vision, but the good news is that regular dilated eye exams by an ophthalmologist and timely treatment, if needed, can save vision for the vast majority of diabetics," said David W. Parke II, M.D., executive vice president and CEO of the Academy. "That is why we're urging people with diabetes to get EyeCommitted. By taking charge of their eye health, Americans can greatly reduce their risk of losing their sight from diabetes."



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The EyeCommitted campaign, which will be promoted through the power of social media channels, will include an interactive pledge application that:

- Encourages visitors to take the EyeCommitted pledge to have an annual eye exam;
- Allows users to share the pledge and campaign information with friends and family;
- Features important diabetic eye disease information and a new video that tells the compelling stories of two patients with diabetic retinopathy; and
- Allows users to post the application onto their preferred social media sites.

For each pledge, the Academy will commit another \$1 to its diabetic eye health education efforts.

Detailed information about diabetic eye disease is also available on the EyeSmart Web site, www.geteyesmart.org.

The EyeCommitted campaign comes at a time when there is a documented rise in type 2 dia-

betes rates among Americans, particularly among the young. An estimated 23.6 million Americans have type 2 diabetes, but nearly one-quarter are unaware of it. African-Americans and people of Hispanic heritage are more likely to have diabetes.

"As ophthalmologists, we are concerned that the trend toward younger age at diagnosis will mean that people will have to manage their eye health closely for decades, including through their peak work years," said Dr. Parke. "That's why it is critical for people with type 2 diabetes to get an eye exam as soon after their diagnosis as possible and then annually thereafter." For people with type 1 diabetes, also known as juvenile diabetes, the Academy recommends that the first dilated eye exam should take place within three to five years of initial diagnosis and then annually thereafter.

To find an Eye M.D. in your area, please visit www.geteyesmart.org. Consumers can submit questions about eye health to an ophthalmologist at www.geteyesmart.org/eyecommitted.

About The American Academy Of Ophthalmology

AAO is the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons—Eye M.D.s—with more than 27,000 members worldwide. Eye health care is provided by the three "O's"—opticians, optometrists and ophthalmologists. It is the ophthalmologist, or Eye M.D., who can treat it all—eye diseases and injuries—and perform eye surgery. For more information, visit the Academy's Web site at www.aao.org.