



Eye on Health

Baby Boomers At Greater Risk For Glaucoma

(NAPSA)—Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the United States and may have a potentially devastating impact on the nation's 76 million aging baby boomers. In fact, according to The Glaucoma Foundation, aging is a significant risk factor for developing glaucoma.

Today, between two and three million Americans over the age of 40, or about one in every 30 people in this age group, have glaucoma, an eye disease associated with an increase in fluid pressure within the eye. At least half of those affected are unaware they have the disease, and it is estimated that by the year 2030, the amount of glaucoma cases will nearly double.

This dramatic increase in age-related eye diseases threatens to overwhelm the nation's health care resources and diminishes the quality of life for millions, according to Prevent Blindness America. "The exciting news is that there are treatments available to lower eye pressure, and Medicare covers annual eye examinations for those over age 65 and at a high risk for glaucoma," said Eve Higginbotham, M.D., professor and chair in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore.

The following are some helpful healthy aging eyecare tips:

- **Get Screened:** Early detection of high pressure may help reduce the risks of developing glaucoma. Ask your doctor about a test that measures pressure in the eye, such as a dilated eye exam.

- **Know Your Risk:** Remember the risk factors for glaucoma. People at highest risk are those with elevated eye pressure, African Americans, individuals over the age of 40, or those with a family history of the disease.

"It is crucial people are aware of the risk factors associated with glaucoma and make an effort to seek proper treatment, because once vision has been lost, it cannot be restored," according to Scott Christensen, president and chief executive officer of The Glaucoma Foundation.

Xalatan® (latanoprost ophthalmic solution), was recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as an initial treatment for elevated eye pressure in patients with open-angle glaucoma. Xalatan is available as a once-daily prescription eye drop.

Xalatan can slowly cause an increase in the amount of brown eye color, can darken eyelids and eyelashes, and increase the growth of eyelashes of the treated eye. Color changes can increase as long as Xalatan is administered; eye color changes are likely to be permanent. The most commonly reported side effects in clinical studies with Xalatan include blurred vision, burning and stinging, eye redness, the feeling that something is in the eye, eye itching, darkening of eye color and irritation of the clear front part surface of the eye.

For full prescribing information, visit www.Xalatan.com. For free information about glaucoma, visit www.glaucomainfo.com.