

Prevent Blindness: The Sight Saving People

In 1908, spurred to action after learning that 30% of blindness in newborns was easily preventable, volunteers banded together to organize around a state-by-state advocacy campaign that eradicated a form of infant blindness that was rampant at the turn of the century. 115 years later, that movement has evolved into a patient advocacy organization which works to preserve vision and eye health across all ages, with an emphasis on equitable access to eyecare for all. We are Prevent Blindness.

Mission Statement

The mission of Prevent Blindness is to prevent blindness and preserve sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, we touch the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening training, community and patient engagement programs, public health research, and more.

Why is our mission so important?

Blindness and visual impairments exact a great price from individuals and society. Vision loss can rob people of their independence, mobility, and quality of life. More than seven million people are living with uncorrectable vision loss, including blindness, yet half of all blindness can be prevented. And beyond the personal health and wellness impacts, vision and eye health problems exact an enormous financial cost to society, estimated conservatively at \$172 billion annually.

Access to a pair of glasses is shockingly still a challenge for far too many. Our work tackles this inequity, while at the same

time focusing on many other vision conditions. In adults, the most common eye diseases are glaucoma, cataract, diabetes-related retinopathy, and macular degeneration. In children, serious eye disorders include “lazy eye” (amblyopia) and strabismus (crossed eyes), and we are seeing a dramatic rise in the rate of myopia (nearsightedness) – all of which can lead to a lifetime of vision problems and increased risk for vision loss. Eye injuries in both adults and children that occur at home, while playing sports, and at the workplace, are also a leading cause of permanent sight loss.

And there are many other less common but potentially life altering disorders.

For more information,
visit us on the web at:
PreventBlindness.org

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What are our programs and services?

Together, with our network of affiliates and partnering organizations, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating unnecessary vision loss and inequities in eye health.

We promote early detection of vision and eye health problems and access to eye care by providing certified vision screening training to thousands of volunteers every year. These efforts are supplemented through corporate voucher program partnerships that allow us to provide free and low-cost eye care and eyeglasses to those who need them most.

We provide a large library of vision and eye health education resources – in English and Spanish – to the public. Accessible through our website – [PreventBlindness.org](https://www.preventblindness.org) – these resources are largely promoted through our many social media channels, along with traditional media outreach. All our content is reviewed and approved by our volunteer Scientific Committee.

We regularly meet with policy makers in Washington, DC and across the nation to educate our leaders on the importance programs and research that save sight, and to advocate for funding and improved policies which advance our mission.

We create community among those living with eye health

problems through several programs. Our **ASPECT Patient Engagement Program**, empowers those living with a variety of conditions, and their caregivers, to become active advocates for eye health – their own, their families', and their communities'; **The Glaucoma Community** connects those living with this sight-threatening condition and shares resources and updates on related advances; and our **Living Well with Low Vision** resource provides information, supports, and networking aimed at equipping those with low vision to overcome any obstacles to living their highest quality of life.

Our **Center for Vision and Population Health at Prevent Blindness** advances an appreciation of eye health within the public health sector by convening expert stakeholders to ensure all health allies are empowered to integrate vision care into population health agendas. This work is supported by our **Vision Integration Library**, filled with resources for public health workers, health care professionals, and community service workers; and our annual **Focus on Eye Health Summit**, which stimulates dialogue around population health trends and topics such as equity, research, surveillance, access, prevention, service integration, program development, and many more.

And our **National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness** advances a public health infrastructure to promote and ensure a comprehensive continuum of vision and eye health care for young children. Committed to conducting this work through strong partnerships, sound science, and targeted policy initiatives, the Center serves as a resource for leadership development, health promotion, education and training, and general awareness to public and private entities, as well as families and other caretakers.

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