

# EYE ON HEALTH

## EyeCare America Urges Seniors To Make A Healthy Resolution For Their Eyes

*EyeCare America Ophthalmologists Providing Eye Exams At  
No Out-of-Pocket Cost In Honor Of Glaucoma Awareness Month*

(NAPSA)—Each year as the New Year begins, people around the world resolve to make changes that will result in longer, happier and healthier lives. Often, people are determined to lose weight while others are committed to kicking unhealthy habits such as smoking. With those age 65 and older at high risk for developing eye disease, EyeCare America would like to add “Get a Glaucoma Eye Exam!” to their list of healthy resolutions, and Glaucoma Awareness Month in January is the perfect time to do it.

In honor of Glaucoma Awareness Month taking place in January 2011, EyeCare America, a public service program of the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, provides eye exams at no out-of-pocket cost to people age 65 and older and offers free educational materials. The eye exams are provided by a corps of nearly 7,000 volunteer ophthalmologists across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Those interested in the program can visit [www.eyecareamerica.org](http://www.eyecareamerica.org) to see if they are eligible. The organization’s online referral center also enables friends and family members to find out instantly if their loved ones are eligible to be matched with an EyeCare America volunteer ophthalmologist.

“Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness among some U.S. Hispanics,” said Rene Rodriguez-Sains, M.D. “That’s why this January, in honor of Glaucoma Awareness Month, EyeCare America



**Many older Americans may be eligible for free eye care.**

urges the Hispanic community to learn about its risk factors for glaucoma.”

### What Is Glaucoma?

In a healthy eye, clear fluid is constantly being made behind the iris and leaving the eye through a microscopic drainage canal in the front of the eye. If this drainage channel becomes blocked, the pressure inside the eye goes up and often causes glaucoma damage to the optic nerve. This is the nerve that connects the eye to the brain, so damage to it causes loss of vision.

### Who Is At Risk?

While the causes of glaucoma are not completely known, we do know that risk factors for its development include a family history of glaucoma, race and older age. Glaucoma may affect people of any age, from newborns to the elderly, but is more common in adults as they approach their senior years. African-Americans, Hispanics and people with diabetes are also at increased risk of developing the disease.

EyeCare America is designed for people who:

- Are U.S. citizens or legal residents
- Are age 65 and older
- Have not seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years
- Do not receive eye care through an HMO or the VA.

To see immediately if you, a loved one or a friend, 65 or older, is eligible to receive a referral for an eye exam and care, visit [www.eyecareamerica.org](http://www.eyecareamerica.org).

EyeCare America is co-sponsored by the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc., with additional support provided by Alcon. The program is endorsed by state and subspecialty ophthalmological societies.

### About EyeCare America

Established in 1985, EyeCare America, the public service program of the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, is committed to the preservation of sight, accomplishing its mission through public service and education. EyeCare America provides eye care services to medically underserved seniors and those at increased risk for eye disease through its corps of nearly 7,000 volunteer ophthalmologists dedicated to serving their communities. More than 90 percent of the care made available is provided at no out-of-pocket cost to the patients. Since its inception, EyeCare America has helped more than 1.5 million people. EyeCare America is a non-profit program whose success is made possible through charitable contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations. More information can be found at [www.eyecareamerica.org](http://www.eyecareamerica.org).