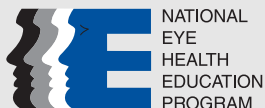


From vision research to eye health education



INSIDE

Steps Initiative 2

Community Award Recipients Gather 5

VISION USA 6

Healthy WV 2010 8

Nation's Youth Create Visions of Eye Health 10

Alabama Holds Symposium 12

Lighthouse Launches New Campaign 14

Diabetes Prevention Campaign 16

National Family Caregiver Support Program 19

The National Eye Health Education Program is coordinated by the National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This administrative document may be reprinted without permission.

Awards Program Spurs Communities to Action

The National Eye Institute (NEI) has announced the 32 recipients of the first Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards. The awards provide more than \$315,000 in funding for community-based eye health education and promotion programs targeted to children, older adults, and multicultural populations.

The projects mirror vision objectives in *Healthy People 2010*, the Nation's health promotion and disease prevention initiative. They represent substantial diversity in terms of eye health topics, age groups, racial/ethnic populations, geographic areas, types of activities, and partnerships. Information on specific projects can be found at www.healthyvision2010.org.

The NEI received 523 applications from organizations in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. A panel of eye health professionals and health education experts reviewed the applications.

Evaluation criteria covered the project's approach and activities, effectiveness, project director, organizational capabilities, collaborations, and budget.



Exchanging ideas and information are **Kelly K. Nichols**, Ohio State University College of Optometry, left, and **Barbara Kondilis**, Rhode Island Department of Health (see story on page 5).

"*Healthy People 2010* is a comprehensive plan to improve the health and well-being of all Americans," said Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). "Promoting

(Continued on page 15)



The New Steps Initiative:

A Step Forward for Prevention and Eye Health Education

The new *Steps to a HealthierUS* (Steps) initiative represents the latest milestone in a long history of Federal health promotion and disease prevention efforts. It ties to and strengthens prevention efforts already underway throughout the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including *Healthy People 2010* and the National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) and Healthy Vision activities coordinated by the National Eye Institute (NEI).

The Steps initiative provides another avenue for the NEI to establish best practices and demonstrate that prevention based on science and collaboration works. Most important, it can reinforce NEHEP and Healthy Vision messages encouraging people with diabetes to reduce their risk of blindness by having regular dilated eye exams. Indeed, one of the new Steps publications states, “Regular eye exams and timely treatment could prevent up to 90 percent of diabetes-related blindness.” (See page 3.)

NEHEP, Healthy Vision, and the Steps initiative share the same fundamental operating principles: a strong science base, collaboration at all levels, and effective programs. The NEI launched NEHEP more than a decade ago, bringing together public and private organizations to help educate Americans about the importance of eye health. Representatives of many of these

same organizations have joined with others to serve on the Healthy Vision work group, which succeeded in getting 10 vision objectives in *Healthy People 2010*. The NEI, the NEHEP Partnership, and the Healthy Vision Consortium now are focusing on achieving those objectives and making vision a public health priority.

In May, under the Healthy Vision umbrella, the NEI has launched the first national observance of Healthy Vision Month (www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm2003).

Each year throughout the decade, a Healthy Vision objective will be showcased. To promote activities at the local level, the NEI is providing downloadable materials and resources.

Featured on the cover story in this issue of *Outlook*, the new Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards program demonstrates two essential strategies in achieving the Healthy Vision objectives. First is identifying effective community programs. Second is expanding the vision health team. Of the initial 32 recipients of these awards, some are familiar names in the vision community, others are newcomers to eye health.

The recent memorandum of understanding signed by the American Optometric Association and HHS represents another example of efforts to strengthen collaboration. The NEI, the lead Federal agency for

vision, has played a key role in nurturing this public-private sector relationship.

Since the beginning of NEHEP, the NEI has aligned its eye health education efforts with larger Federal programs, including Healthy People and now the Steps initiative, and even international blindness prevention activities. In its vision leadership role, the NEI has collaborated with other HHS agencies and voluntary organizations with common goals. For World Sight Day last year, for example, the NEI teamed with Lighthouse International, Lions Clubs International, and the International Agency to Prevent Blindness.

The NEI continues to provide leadership and resources for the development of innovative and effective eye health education programs. For example, in funding the Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards Program, the NEI expects to identify creative, collaborative projects with longer term potential and to extend the Institute's reach and effectiveness. The NEI will spotlight exemplary programs and contribute to the growing knowledge base for eye health education.

For more information on these programs, visit the NEI Website at www.nei.nih.gov.

Steps to a HealthierUS: Putting Prevention First

The new U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) *Steps to a HealthierUS* initiative champions the power of prevention and advances the *President's HealthierUS* initiative. The initiative targets asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, and obesity, and promotes lifestyle choices about nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use.

In putting prevention first, HHS is providing funding as well as a strong knowledge base. A proposed \$100 million increase in the fiscal year 2004 budget will strengthen state and local efforts to promote healthy choices. Three new publications document proven interventions and existing science. The *Power of Prevention* describes the economic and health burden of the targeted chronic diseases. *Prevention Strategies That Work* provides information about risk factors, program examples, and technical resources. *Prevention Programs in Action* showcases how prevention works and describes exemplary prevention programs across the United States.

The publications are posted at www.HealthierUS.gov/steps. Webcasts of the recent summit where the initiative was introduced can be viewed at the site.



Recipients of Healthy Vision Community Awards

4Sight Blindness Prevention Program, Scheie Eye Institute, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

Beloit Area Community Health Center, Beloit, WI

Cambridge Health Alliance, Department of Community Affairs, Somerville, MA

Columbus Regional Healthcare System Inc., Columbus, GA

Community Health Coalition, Inc., Durham, NC

Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services, Dallas, TX

Hill Health Corporation, New Haven, CT

Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Knox County Health Department, Galesburg, IL

KU HealthPartners, Inc., Kansas City, KS

Lions Club of Madelia, Madelia, MN

Louisiana Eye Health Educational Institute, Port Allen, LA

Massachusetts Association for the Blind, VISION Community Services, Brookline, MA

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Rockville, MD

New England Eye Institute, Boston, MA

Ohio Optometric Association, Worthington, OH

Prevent Blindness North Carolina, Raleigh, NC

Prevent Blindness Ohio, Columbus, OH

Rural Women's Health Project, Gainesville, FL

Silver City Lions Club, Silver City, NM

St. Mary's Mercy Medical Center, Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology, Grand Rapids, MI

St. Vincent de Paul Village, Inc., San Diego, CA

State of Rhode Island and Providence

Plantations Department of Health, Providence, RI

Times Community Services, Baltimore Times Foundation, Baltimore, MD

Mile Square Health Center, Chicago, IL

University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Department of Ophthalmology, San Antonio, TX

Voices for Children in Nebraska, Omaha, NE

Wald Community Nursing Center of the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Baltimore, MD

Watson Center, Largo, FL

Whittier Street Health Center, Roxbury, MA

Wright State University, Miamo Valley College of Nursing and Health, Dayton, OH

West Virginia University Extension Service, Morgantown, WV

Community Award Recipients Gather

Networking, networking, and more networking. That's what representatives of the first Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards found most valuable about their recent two-day orientation meeting in Washington, DC.

The meeting provided an overview of *Healthy People 2010* and the awards program, networking opportunities, a framework for health communication and health education, and an overview of resources available. All 32 projects were represented.

Participants shared experiences and knowledge about what works and what doesn't work. They traded ideas, identified needs, and welcomed practical tips on how to do everything from disseminating a news release to pretesting messages. The emphasis was on interaction, not presentation. The result: high energy levels for the work to be accomplished back home.

Judging from the e-mail and telephone calls, their work has begun with great enthusiasm. Within days of the meeting, Robin Lewy was suggesting a promotional collaboration. She also was planning focus group discussions to test materials for the Rural Women's Health Project in Gainesville, FL. A Web address for information on visual standards was sent by Sandra Fox, who is

directing the Low Vision Screening, Referral, and Education Program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Less than two weeks after the meeting, John Mickle had convened the first meeting of the advisory committee for "Healthy Vision for a Lifetime" in Durham, NC. Armed with information, collaborating ideas, and evaluation forms he gathered at the NEI meeting, he called on advisors to help promote eye health among African Americans over age 60.

Roger Wilson, who is heading up the New England Eye Institute's outreach project in Boston, reported an important early finding: Members of the city's Vietnamese community are not aware of the importance of eye care and eye exams. Wilson predicts that the project will have a positive impact on reducing health disparities.

In welcoming attendees, Judith A. Stein, M.A., associate director for Communication, Health Education, and Public Liaison at the NEI, predicted, "These very important projects will lead to good things." So agreed a participant, who wrote, "This meeting was the start of something good. Mark my words, this money has been well spent. You will know in the years to come. Thank you so very much."

VISION USA

Through **VISION USA**, the American Optometric Association (AOA) and optometry are committed to providing free eye examinations to uninsured, low-income individuals and families who, as income earners may not qualify for government aid or private health-care assistance. Nearly 7,000 doctors annually provide eye care through the program and have served more than 315,000 children and adults across the Nation since 1991.

While the program provides care to people of all ages, **VISION USA** is continuing its commitment to *America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth*, a program

founded by Secretary of State Colin Powell that brings together business, government, and non-profit organizations to help America's youth. In addition, the association has dedicated itself to meeting the 10 vision objectives set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Healthy People 2010* National Health and Disease Prevention Program. These objectives call for reducing vision loss due to eye diseases

and other conditions; **VISION USA** can be instrumental in reaching those goals.

“Eye health issues cross all socioeconomic lines, and fortunately, for those truly in need of optometric care, the **VISION USA** program provides assistance,” explains J. Pat Cummings, O.D., president of the American Optometric Association.

Through the **VISION USA** program,

optometrists have diagnosed a wide variety of eye health, vision, and general health problems in people who may have had no other way to get the eye care they needed.



Nearly 9 out of 10 **VISION USA** patients examined have one or more eye health or vision problems. Undetected vision problems often lead to irreversible vision loss—making the care that **VISION USA** provides even more valuable to its recipients.

Because the number of Americans without health coverage continues to grow, **VISION USA** meets a critical need, according

to Roger Pabst, O.D., chair of the **VISION USA** committee. “Unfortunately, we have no shortage of potential patients who qualify for the free exams. A record number of Americans have NO health insurance—estimates are close to 42 million. Optometric care through **VISION USA** may well be these patients’ only gateway to the health care system,” said Dr. Pabst.

To receive free services, individuals must have a job or live in a household where there is one working member, have no vision insurance, have income below an established level based on household size, and not have had an eye exam within two years. Eligibility may vary by state.

The eligible applicant will be matched with a volunteer doctor of optometry who will provide a comprehensive eye exam at no charge. The doctors are donating their

services and may be limited in some areas. Eyewear may also be provided at no cost or for a small fee/donation in some states.



A doctor examines a patient’s eye using an indirect ophthalmoscope (courtesy of the American Optometric Association).

Applicants can find out if they qualify by calling 1-800-766-4466 or by visiting the AOA Website at www.aoa.org/visionusa. Online applications are available in English and Spanish. For more information or free brochures and posters, please contact the **VISION USA** coordinator at 1-800-365-2219, ext. 261.

Administrative costs for **VISION USA** are funded by an exclusive grant from VSP (Vision Service Plan), the Nation’s largest provider of eye care wellness benefits.



A doctor evaluates a child as part of a comprehensive eye exam (courtesy of the American Optometric Association).

Healthy West Virginia 2010

Honored by American Public Health Association

Healthy West Virginia 2010—A Healthier Future for West Virginia is the first state public health plan in the Nation to translate national vision and eye health objectives from *Healthy People 2010* into its state public health agenda.

It is through the efforts and commitment of West Virginia Governor Bob Wise and his staff members Paul L. Nusbaum, secretary of Health and Human Resources; Henry G. Taylor, commissioner, Bureau for Public Health; and Alan P. Holmes, director, Office of Epidemiology and Health Promotion that vision and eye health are brought to the forefront.

Upon receiving the American Public Health Association award, Secretary Nusbaum stated, “Governor Wise and I realize the significance that vision plays in the lives of our young West Virginians in creating a secure economic future for the state.”

Five of the 10 national objectives are now incorporated into the state public health policy plan through the combined efforts of the following:

- Tom Sims, director, Division of Health Promotion
- Jennifer L. Weiss, program manager

- American Association of Retired Persons—West Virginia
- Kanawha County Schools
- Prevent Blindness America of West Virginia
- West Virginia Department of Education
- West Virginia Academy of Ophthalmology
- West Virginia Optometric Association
- West Virginia University Center on Aging and Eye Institute.

Tom Sims, director, Division of Health Promotion, said, “The inclusion of vision and eye health objectives in the state plan was in part due to our interest in addressing quality of life issues for all West Virginians, in addition to length of life.”

West Virginia Healthy People 2010 is the initiative that defines the state’s health agenda and guides policy. It contains more than 300 specific objectives that will be monitored over the next 5 to 10 years. Through *West Virginia Healthy People 2010*, the public health work force of the state of West Virginia can help to focus both government and private sector efforts toward a healthy state by including vision and eye health needs among these priorities.

Vision and eye health rank second only to oral health as the greatest unmet public health care need in the United States. Many of the state's infants and young children are at high risk for vision problems because of hereditary, prenatal, and perinatal factors. Vision and eye care services are critically important to maintaining independence and quality of life in the later years. Also, West Virginia is one of the states with the highest prevalence rates of diabetes mellitus. Diabetic eye disease is the leading cause of blindness in individuals of working age (29-74 years).

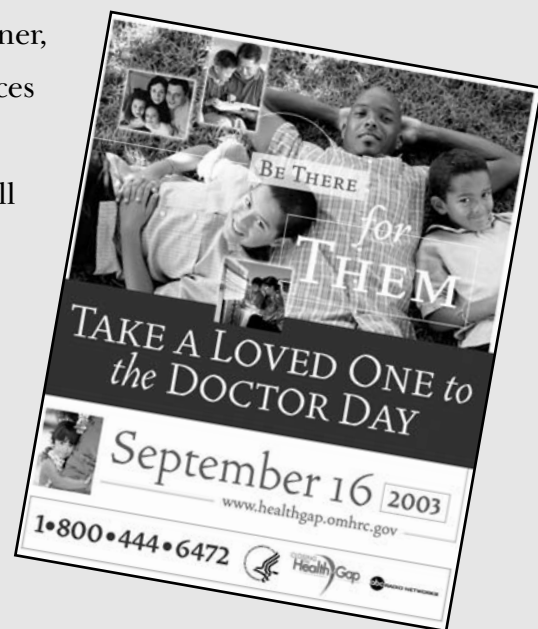
All of these factors, in addition to West Virginia's rurality and economic status as

one of the poorest states in the Nation, compound the challenges. However, research repeatedly demonstrates that the number one indicator of health status is socioeconomic status; vision and eye health are intricately related to economic viability. With the leadership and foresight of the Governor and the state's leading public health advocates, through the objectives expressed in the *Healthy West Virginia 2010*, West Virginians will be able to enjoy their state's unique beauty and actively participate in life.

For more information on *Healthy West Virginia 2010*, please contact Tom Sims at 304-558-0644 or tomsims@wvdhhr.org.

Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day

Joined by ABC Radio personality Tom Joyner, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson announced this year's Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day will be held on Sept. 16, 2003. Doctor Day is a key element of the Department's Closing the Health Gap educational campaign designed to improve health among racial and ethnic minority populations. The focus of the day is to encourage individuals to take charge of their health by visiting a health professional or to encourage a friend or loved one to do the same. This will be the first year vision is included.



More information is available at www.healthgap.omhrc.gov.

Nation's Youth Create Visions of Eye Health

The first-ever Healthy Vision Month took place in May 2003 with the goal of making child and adolescent eye health a national public health priority.

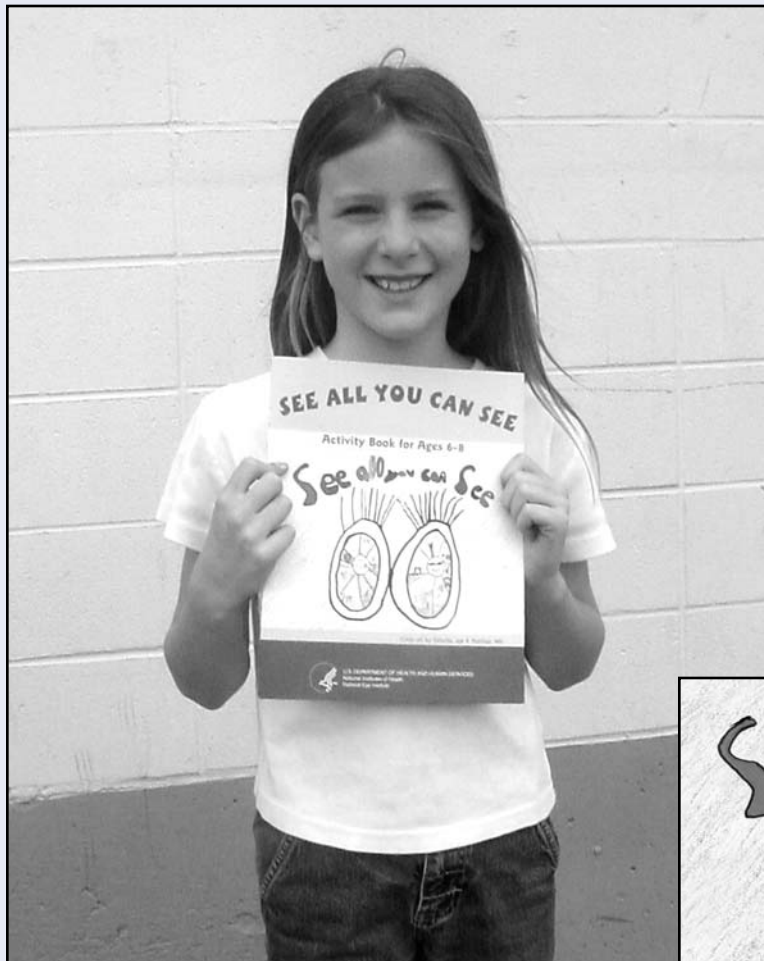
The National Eye Institute (NEI) teamed with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America to sponsor a national Healthy Vision Poster Contest. The contest's two grand prize winners, one for ages 6 to 9 and one for

ages 10 to 12, were selected from a pool of 531 entries. The winners are:

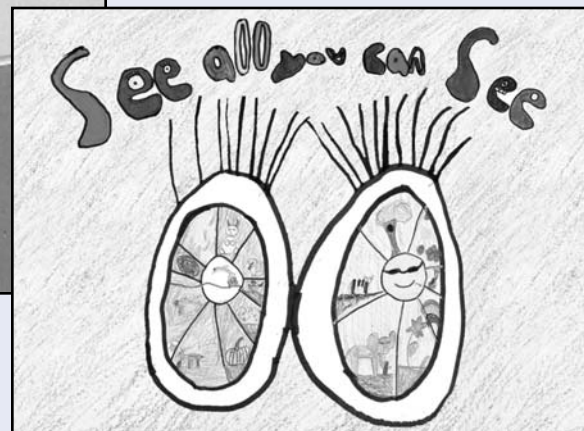
- **Tabatha**, age 9, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua, NH
- **Michael**, age 11, Boys & Girls Club of San Francisco-Columbia Park Clubhouse, CA

“We are never too young to learn good health practices, especially when it comes

to preserving our sight,” said Dr. Paul A. Sieving, director of the NEI. “To improve quality of life for our children, we must reach out to communities in fun, collaborative, and educational ways, and the NEI’s Healthy Vision Poster Contest is an excellent example of how we are working together to raise awareness and inspire good eye health practices at the local level.”



Tabatha, age 9.



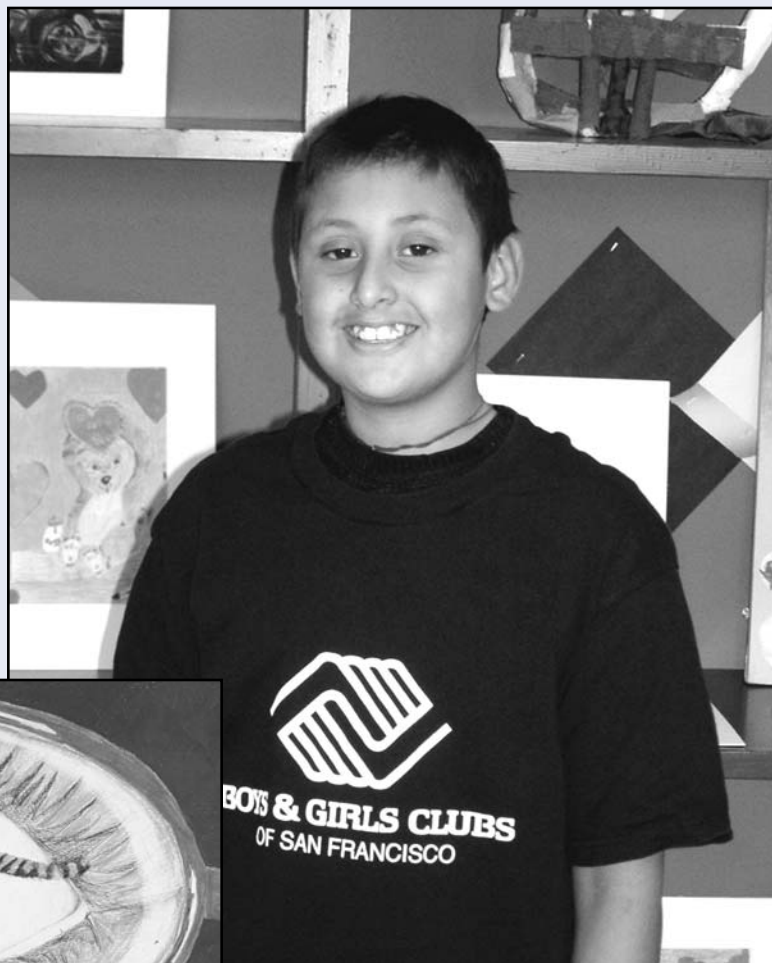
Michael said, “Winning the National Eye Institute contest makes me feel great and better about myself and makes me do more art. Thank you for letting me participate.”

As part of the national outreach effort for the contest, the NEI provided each participating Boys & Girls Club with educational materials, including the NEI’s science-based curriculum “Vision,” which provided local educators and mentors with the opportunity and tools to talk with children about the importance of eye health. Then, using the contest theme of “See All You Can See,” children, aged 6 to 12 and from more than 52 Boys & Girls Clubs of America in 26 states and Japan, created colorful posters to illustrate their unique visions about the importance of sight.

“It’s vitally important that we, as parents, educators, and mentors, make time to teach our children about eye health

and help them to establish a lifelong commitment to maintaining their sight,” said Jenny Atkinson, senior director of Education and the Arts for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. “Our work with the National Eye Institute during the Healthy Vision Poster Contest provided us an opportunity to educate children in our communities in a fun and creative way.”

To view the winning artwork, visit www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm2003.



Michael, age 11.

Alabama Holds Symposium During Healthy Vision Month

In keeping with its mission to promote the health of the human eye through education, research, and patient care, the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama (ESFA) held its first Community Vision Health Education Symposium on Wednesday, May 14, in Birmingham. The Callahan Eye Foundation Hospital co-sponsored the event.

Facilitating the meeting was Stephen A. Horan, Ph.D., president of Community Health Solutions in Richmond, VA. Dr. Horan and his company provide strategic and analytical services for health and human service organizations.

“The symposium was of interest to any current or potential ESFA grant applicants,



The daylong event included noted speakers, workshops, discussion groups, and networking opportunities for anyone with a stake in promoting eye health in Alabama. Attendees learned about effective eye health programs, what’s being done in Alabama, what resources are available to individuals developing eye health programs, and ways to improve grant-writing skills.

The keynote speaker was Rosemary Janiszewski, M.S., CHES, deputy director of the Office of Communication, Health Education and Public Liaison at the National Eye Institute (NEI) in Bethesda, MD. Ms. Janiszewski is the *Healthy People 2010* coordinator for the NEI and director of the National Eye Health Education Program.

non-profit providers of eye health services, researchers interested in effective eye health education programs, public health officers, and public education officials,” said Torrey Smitherman, executive director of ESFA. “This symposium was planned to coincide with Healthy Vision Month, a time when national attention is focused on the importance of vision health,” she said.

Anne Banks, public relations manager at Callahan Eye Foundation Hospital, said that symposium participants received “informative resource material from national organizations, guidelines for effective eye health education programs, and networking contacts at other organizations.”

Symposium topics included:

- Which population segments are at higher risk for eye health problems
- The basic elements of a well-planned and executed health behavior change program (social marketing issues)
- Best practices for community-based eye health education
- Updates on the activities of the NEI
- What other organizations are doing to improve eye health in Alabama and throughout the Nation
- How to develop quality grant applications
- How to develop projects to inform the public about eye health and advances in vision research

- Networking opportunities with others who might become collaborative partners in the future

Tracy Bischoff, University of Alabama-Birmingham Media Relations, felt the symposium was very well done. “The networking opportunities are invaluable, over and above presentations. So many of these groups already network and partner, and it was beneficial to put faces with names and to hear brief overviews of what each program does,” she said.

Interested persons are encouraged to contact Torrey Smitherman or Shirley Hamilton at 205-325-8508 or info@eye-sightfoundation.org for more information.

NEI Announces a New Request for Applications (RFA):

Development of Innovative Approaches to Enhance Vision Health Communication

The purpose of this RFA is to encourage the submission of research grant applications that create, develop, and evaluate health communication strategies aimed at translating vision research advances into improved health. Projects should be based on current health communication theory and directed toward disease prevention and health promotion. The NEI seeks investigator-initiated applications using novel methods that reach out to public, public health, or professional audiences. The research should focus on improving utilization of current scientific knowledge in visual disease prevention and treatment in any of the six scientific mission areas of the NEI. It is expected that applications in response to this RFA will be from interdisciplinary teams of health communication experts knowledgeable about strategies, tactics, development, dissemination, and evaluation of health information based upon scientific discovery, as well as vision scientists knowledgeable about the visual system. Applications are due November 12, 2003.

For more information, visit the NEI Website at:
<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-EY-03-002.html>.

Lighthouse Launches New Campaign

Do you know the differences between normal changes in vision as people age and changes in vision due to age-related eye disease? Lighthouse International is spearheading a national public awareness campaign, **Vision Loss Is Not a Normal Part of Aging—Open Your Eyes to the Facts!** to promote awareness about the normal changes we can expect as we age, the common eye disorders that can impair sight, and the benefits of vision rehabilitation for people with vision loss and those close to them.

According to Cynthia Stuen, D.S.W., senior vice president for education at Lighthouse International, “Most normal, age-related vision changes are not severe. A new eyeglass prescription or better lighting may be all that’s needed. However, it’s important to know warning signs for age-related eye disorders, to have an annual eye exam, and to seek help from vision rehabilitation professionals early, when vision can no longer be corrected to the normal range with eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery.”

Lighthouse research has shown that a majority of Americans believe—mistakenly—that older adults become visually impaired as a part of the normal aging process. As a result, they may not seek help. In fact, 94 percent of middle-aged and older adults who reported some vision problem did not take advantage of any type of vision rehabilitation services.



Educational booklets in English and Spanish, promotional posters, bookmarks, radio public service announcements, news releases, and Web letters are all being used to reach older

adults and the organizations that serve them, with a targeted effort on public libraries. To date, more than 850 organizations and nearly 900 individuals have requested materials. An evaluation of the effectiveness of various dissemination strategies is underway to determine the best ways to reach older people.

The booklets and other awareness materials are made possible by a grant from the AARP Andrus Foundation with supplemental funds from the National Eye Institute. To view the materials online, go to www.lighthouse.org/vision_loss.

● Awards Program

(Continued from page 1)

eye health and vision care at the community level is a key component of this program. The Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards program recognizes the commitment of local organizations to improve eye health and quality of life for the people they serve.”

The Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards program also helps community organizations nationwide develop and implement sound educational programs, according to the NEI Director Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D. “These educational

programs extend the availability of vision services to those who need them most. We believe that by working together at the national and local levels, we can encourage individuals and communities to focus on preventive and rehabilitative care and make eye health a priority.”

Plans for a second awards program are underway. Persons wishing to receive the announcement and news about the Community Awards program should send a request to HV2010awards@shs.net.

Open Your Eyes to the Facts!

Lighthouse International is proud to offer FREE materials to the public about vision loss and how it does not relate to aging.



To order a sample packet or a free supply of materials (in English and Spanish), call 1-800-829-0500 or send an e-mail to info@lighthouse.org.

Prevention Campaign Helps Millions at Risk as Diabetes Skyrockets

With diabetes rising at epidemic rates, the latest scientific studies on diabetes prevention offer great hope for over 16 million Americans who are at increased risk for the disease. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy G. Thompson is leading a national campaign to encourage Americans to find out if they are at risk for diabetes and to take small steps to delay or prevent the disease and its many complications. The new campaign will be run by the National Diabetes Education

Program (NDEP), which is jointly sponsored by HHS' National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Business, health, fitness, and nonprofit leaders are joining the "Small Steps. Big Rewards." campaign, the first national diabetes prevention awareness effort, and will help disseminate the campaign's messages and lifestyle change tools to the millions of Americans at risk.

"We are asking Americans to find out if they are at risk for diabetes and we are showing them how to take action to prevent it," said Secretary Thompson. "With the support of business and industry leaders, this critical prevention message will be delivered where Americans live, work, and play and through their health care providers."



The "Small Steps. Big Rewards." campaign emphasizes that relatively modest lifestyle changes can help people prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, the most common

form of the disease. The centerpiece of the campaign is "GAME PLAN for Preventing Type 2 Diabetes," a lifestyle change that is based on the Diabetes Prevention Program clinical trial sponsored by NIH. This landmark study showed that millions of overweight Americans at high risk for type 2 diabetes can delay or prevent the disease by losing five to seven percent of their body weight with moderate changes in diet and increased physical activity.

“Diabetes has risen over 40 percent in just five years,” said Dr. James R. Gavin III, chair of the NDEP. “We know it can be prevented and diabetes prevention is something ordinary Americans can do, with small steps. And we know there’s a big reward—a longer, healthier life. Now we need to make sure everyone knows this good news and is prepared to take action.”

At least 16 million Americans have pre-diabetes, a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. People with pre-diabetes are more likely to develop diabetes within 10 years and also are at a higher risk of having a heart attack or a stroke.

The NDEP strongly recommends that:

- Overweight adults aged 45 or older be tested for pre-diabetes and diabetes.
- Everyone aged 45 and older, even if they are not overweight, should consult with their health care provider about being tested.
- People aged 45 and younger who are overweight and who have one or more of the other risk factors could be at a high risk of developing type 2 diabetes and should consult their health care providers about testing.

NDEP has developed materials for health care providers and people at risk to help people get moving and eat healthier. The GAME PLAN toolkit for health care

providers includes evidence-based suggestions for identifying patients at risk, reviews appropriate tests and diagnostic procedures, and lays out a program providers can follow to help patients change their behaviors. Patient materials, designed to help people take the small steps needed to prevent diabetes, include a fat and calorie counter, a food and activity “tracker” for monitoring and recording behavior, and tips for starting and maintaining a walking program.

For more information on the “Small Steps. Big Rewards.” campaign or to obtain materials to get started on the GAME PLAN, visit www.ndep.nih.gov or call 1-800-438-5383.



HHS Announces New Partnership to Improve the Nation's Visual Health

A public-private partnership between U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the American Optometric Association (AOA) to improve visual health and implement the vision objectives in *Healthy People 2010* has been established.

The partnership, which is detailed in a signed Memorandum of Understanding, aims to prevent blindness and improve the eyesight of Americans.

Under the agreement, HHS will provide technical assistance for data and implementation activities through the National Eye Institute (NEI), the lead agency for the *Healthy People 2010* vision objectives. In addition, HHS will facilitate joint professional education efforts and bring AOA together with other organizations that share a mutual interest in disease prevention, health promotion, and the elimination of health disparities.

For more information on *Healthy People 2010* or to view the Memorandum of Understanding, go to: www.healthyvision2010.org/news.



From (l) to (r):

Matthew Guidry, Deputy Director for External Affairs, Office of Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, HHS

Eve E. Slater, M.D., F.A.C.C., Assistant Secretary for Health, HHS

J. Pat Cummings, O.D., President, American Optometric Association

Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., Director, NEI

National Family Caregiver Support Program

Caregivers of visually impaired elderly

Caregivers have long been considered by Older Americans Act programs as key players in meeting the needs of older persons in the community. The creation of the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) in the 2000 Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act for the first time requires all State Units on Aging (SUAs) and Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to focus on the needs of the caregiver. The NFCSP is intended to offer a “multifaceted system” of caregiver supports that includes, at a minimum, the following services: information; assistance; individual counseling, support groups, and caregiver training; respite care; and supplemental services “on a limited basis, to complement the care provided by eligible caregivers.”

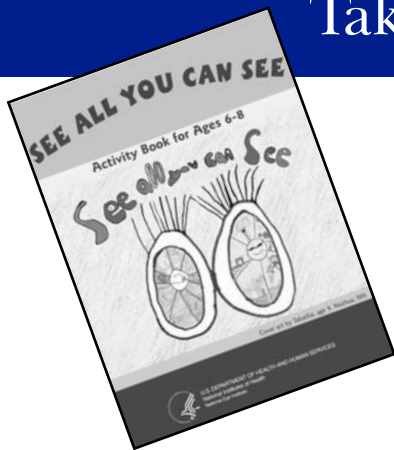
The National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA), under a grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging’s National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), is developing a series of publications designed to provide the aging network with practical tools to facilitate the adoption of a systemic approach in program development. A systemic approach will help ensure that the NFCSP is integrated within the home and

community-based services system and that the needs of caregivers are brought to the forefront of long-term care considerations.

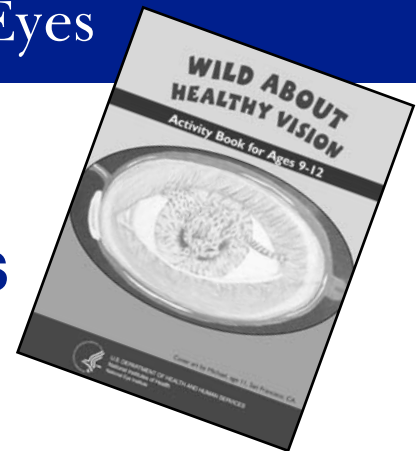
In consultation with experts in the field of vision loss and rehabilitation services, NASUA has developed a publication designed to assist the aging network to identify opportunities and approaches for meeting the needs of visually impaired older consumers and their caregivers. Entitled *Serving Older Persons with Visual Impairments and Their Caregivers, Suggestions for State Units on Aging*, the paper offers suggestions for reaching out to the Older Blind Independent Living Programs and for making connections to the medical community. Knowledge and action steps intended to assist SUAs and AAAs better meet the needs of this population are provided at the conclusion of the document.

For more information on this publication or to obtain a copy, please contact Greg Link, program associate, NASUA, at 202-898-2578 or glink@nasua.org. The publication is also posted on AoA’s Website at www.aoa.gov.

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