

## Announcement

### Glaucoma Awareness Month — January 2016

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month, a time to encourage persons at risk for glaucoma to schedule a comprehensive, dilated eye exam to detect and manage glaucoma. CDC's Vision Health Initiative in the Division of Diabetes Translation has partnered with the National Eye Institute's National Eye Health Education Program to educate the public and raise awareness about glaucoma, its risk factors, and its prevention.

Glaucoma affects the optic nerve in the back of the eye, and is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness (1). Glaucoma has no warning signs, and approximately 50% of persons with glaucoma are unaware that they have the disease; therefore, a comprehensive, dilated eye examination is important for early detection and timely treatment (2). In 2010, approximately 2.7 million persons in the United States aged  $\geq 40$  years had glaucoma; by 2050, this number is projected to increase to 5.5 million persons (3). Groups at high risk include non-Hispanic blacks aged  $>40$  years, Hispanics, Asians, persons aged  $\geq 60$  years, and those who have diabetes or a family history of glaucoma (4). Glaucoma also is associated with an increased risk for falls, fall-related injuries, depression, and reduced overall health and quality of life (5–7).

In addition to regular comprehensive, dilated eye examinations to detect and treat glaucoma, innovative community-based interventions are proving successful in reaching populations at high risk (8). Additional information about activities to promote early detection and treatment of glaucoma is available (<http://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth>, <https://nei.nih.gov/nehep/programs/glaucoma>).

### References

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