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Vision Insurance Coverage is a Sound Investment for a Brighter Future

Prevent Blindness Florida Offers Free Wellness Information to Employers Emphasizing Benefits of Vision Plans and Eye Safety Programs

Tampa, FL (March 1, 2010) – With healthcare costs rising and insurance benefits becoming increasingly difficult to afford, eye health can unfortunately be moved down on the priority list. Although many companies may see adding vision care coverage to their existing insurance plans as an unnecessary expense, vision benefits can actually save on costs. Dilated eye exams can even provide early detection of serious health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, neurological disorders and brain tumors.

A nationwide survey found:

- Vision disorders are the second most prevalent health condition in the United States.
- 11 million Americans live with uncorrected vision problems.
- Of a \$51.4 billion total annual economic impact that adult vision problems bring to the United States, an estimated \$8 billion is attributed to lost worker productivity.
- Two-thirds of Americans state they would be more willing to get an eye exam if they had insurance coverage.
- 63 percent would sign up for vision care coverage if given the opportunity.
- Only 17 percent of employers offer vision plans.

Prevent Blindness Florida offers the Healthy Eyes Vision Wellness Program designed to help companies provide the tools employees need to protect their eye health. The program offers educational and promotional materials that help to deliver critical vision wellness information in the workplace. The program is offered free to employers and has more than 100 leading companies already participating. All of the program's materials were developed by volunteer eye care professionals including ophthalmologists, optometrists and research professionals.

As part of the Healthy Eyes Vision Wellness Program, Prevent Blindness Florida has launched "Sight Saved," a web-based initiative aimed at educating employers about the importance of providing vision benefits to their employees and at encouraging their employees to take advantage of their vision benefits to schedule regular, comprehensive exams and to wear proper eyewear to enhance and protect their vision. The program also advocates to federal and state government on the importance of vision insurance coverage benefits in relation to overall health. The Web site, sightsaved.org, contains public health resources, information about vision in the

workplace and how vision benefits can assist employees, and access to other Prevent Blindness Florida materials and programs.

Many vision plans cover a regular, comprehensive eye exam, which will not only allow employees to maintain their proper eyeglass prescription, but will also serve as a way to detect potential eye and systemic diseases before they become a health care burden. And, some vision plans offer discounts or full coverage for vision correcting glasses or contacts.

“Our goal is to inform companies that providing information and access to quality eye care as part of a comprehensive wellness program can actually save money as well as protect workers,” said James Tobin, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Florida. “We know that in the United States, \$8 billion is attributed to lost worker productivity due to vision problems. We encourage businesses to contact us to find out more about our free programs.”

To find out how your company can sign up for the Healthy Eyes Vision Wellness Program or to receive free information on Sight Saved or eye safety in the workplace, please call Prevent Blindness Florida at 813-874-2020 or by visit www.preventblindnessflorida.org.

About Prevent Blindness Florida

Prevent Blindness Florida, an affiliate of Prevent Blindness America, is a non-profit organization offering over 50 years of vision education and services. Our focus is promoting a lifetime of healthy vision care through advocacy, research, screening and education. You can help Prevent Blindness Florida by donation when you renew your vehicle registration and driver license. For more information contact us at 813-874-2020 ext. 112 or visit our website at www.preventblindnessflorida.org.

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