Age-Related Macular Degeneration a Leading Cause of Blindness for Older Adults

Today, on World Sight Day, the Alliance for Aging Research, in partnership with BrightFocus Foundation, has launched an educational awareness campaign aimed at getting older adults and their caregivers to “Take a Closer Look at AMD.”

Washington, D.C. (PRWEB) October 13, 2016 -- Age-related macular degeneration, or AMD, is an eye disease that is a leading cause of vision loss in older Americans, affecting as many as 11 million people nationwide.

AMD damages the macula—a small region in the center of the eye that contains the millions of cells that give people sharp, central, and color vision. This damage can cause a blurred spot in the center of vision that gets worse with time, although the disease advances differently from person to person, and even from eye to eye. Some people may go years without any noticeable symptoms, while others may experience a rapid decline in their vision.

While AMD rarely causes complete blindness, wet AMD, the more advanced form, can lead to legal blindness without proper treatment. Those with advanced AMD may be able to slow, reduce, and even restore vision loss with available treatments. This makes regular, comprehensive eye exams critical for people at risk, especially those who are over age 60, who have a family history of AMD, who are Caucasian, or who smoke.

Additionally, there are extensive community and health resources available to help individuals experiencing vision loss live with and overcome their vision-related disability.

Today, on World Sight Day, the Alliance for Aging Research (Alliance), in partnership with BrightFocus Foundation, has launched an educational awareness campaign aimed at getting older adults and their caregivers to “Take a Closer Look at AMD.”

“With the aging of the U.S. population, the impact of AMD will only grow, with the number of Americans affected by this disease expected to double to nearly 22 million by 2050,” says Alliance President and CEO Susan Peschin, MHS. “We need to be much more proactive about making sure our loved ones are better monitored for vision loss and that those who have been diagnosed with AMD get the right care.”

This campaign is centered on a new, short, animated “pocket film” that offers an overview of AMD—including its symptoms, impact on lifestyle, treatment, and more. The film is available for viewing here and for download here.

“This film will help people better understand and manage their vision health. Through more research and greater awareness, we can save sight,” said BrightFocus Foundation President and CEO Stacy Pagos Haller. BrightFocus funds scientific research worldwide on macular degeneration, glaucoma, and Alzheimer’s and provides materials to families impacted by these diseases.

“According to a recent report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine called Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative, millions of people have undiagnosed or untreated vision problems, despite the public’s perception that healthy vision is vital to overall health,” notes Peschin. “This campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of timely diagnoses and treatment.”
For additional resources on AMD, please visit the educational AMD pages from the Alliance here and BrightFocus Foundation here. The conversation can also be followed on Twitter using the hashtag #LookatAMD.

This campaign was supported by unrestricted educational funding from BrightFocus Foundation and Genentech.

About the Alliance for Aging Research

The Alliance for Aging Research is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the pace of scientific discoveries and their application in order to vastly improve the universal human experience of aging and health. AAR was founded in 1986 in Washington, D.C., and has since become a valued advocacy organization and a respected influential voice with policymakers. Visit www.agingresearch.org for more information.

About BrightFocus Foundation

BrightFocus Foundation is currently funding over 150 research projects around the world on macular degeneration, glaucoma, and Alzheimer’s. BrightFocus provides print and digital resources for families impacted by these diseases. More information at www.BrightFocus.org.
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