

Serious vision loss is on the rise

Prevent Blindness America has posted on their web-site

- www.preventblindness.org/visionproblems - a downloadable and searchable data base with graphs, prevalence rates and estimates of the number of cases of age-related eye conditions taken from the updated 2012 "Vision Problems in the U.S." report. This tool enables users to research a wide range of information including eye disease and condition numbers broken down by state, age, sex, and race, and provides comparisons across disease conditions.

Here are some highlights from the "Vision Problems in the U.S. Report":

- 2,069,403 people age 50 and older have late **AMD (age-related macular degeneration), a 25 percent increase**
- 24,409,978 million people age 40 and older have **cataracts, a 19 percent increase**
- 2,719,379 million people age 40 and older have open-angle **glaucoma, a 22 percent increase**
- 7,685,237 million people ages 40 and older have **diabetic retinopathy, an 89 percent increase.**

A preliminary update to the 2007 Prevent Blindness America "Economic Impact of Vision Problems" report was also presented and it shows a \$1 billion increase in costs of excess medical care expenditures, informal care and health-related quality of life related to visual impairment and blindness.

Further cost information is being developed and a full updated report on the economic impact of vision problems will be available at a later date.

Did you know that 61 million Americans are at high risk of serious vision loss? Educating yourself, friends, and family members on how to properly care for vision is essential in fighting blindness. The term "blindness" is an umbrella term that includes visual impairments due to glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy, among others.

Macular Degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss among Americans age 65+. Other than age-related vision loss, diabetes has become the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults ages 20 - 74. People with

diabetes are 40% more likely to develop glaucoma and 60% more likely to develop cataracts.