

Vision Health Initiative (VHI)

Improving the Nation's Vision Health



The Numbers

- **14 million** individuals in the US aged 12 years and older have visual impairment; 80% could have their vision improved through refractive correction.
- Glaucoma is **4-5 times** higher in African Americans than whites.
- **89%** of the US adult population are NOT aware that eye complications caused by diabetes usually have no early warning symptoms.
- **14%** of adults in poor families reported vision trouble compared to 7% of adults in families that are not poor.
- State data show that **more than 50%** of adults who did not seek eye care reported lack of awareness or costs as the main reasons.
- **\$139 billion** is the total economic burden of eye disorders and vision impairment in the United States.

VHI's Roles and Objectives

- CDC's Vision Health Initiative (VHI) is designed to improve the nation's vision health through a coordinated public health approach to improve surveillance, applied public health research, and programs and policies that prevent and control eye disease, eye injury, and vision loss.

Objectives Include:

- To examine the individual and societal burden of vision impairment and blindness
- To identify, prioritize, and disseminate evidence-based and cost-effective public health interventions to prevent vision loss, promote eye health, and reduce health disparities
- To leverage resources, facilitate strategic partnerships, and provide technical assistance to national, state, and community partners
- To integrate appropriate and effective vision health activities into existing public health programs

What's Happening?

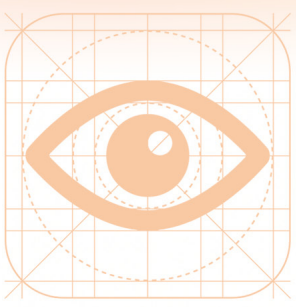
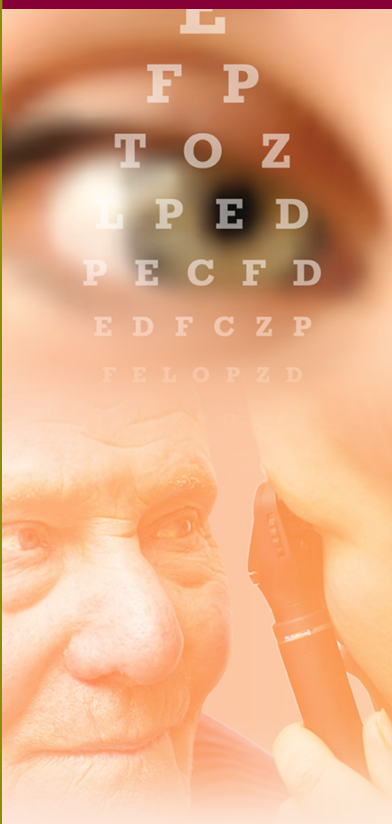
Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report: In 2014, VHI and other sponsors initiated an IOM report on vision and public health, *Public Health Approaches to Reduce Vision Impairment and Promote Eye Health*. The IOM expert panel will provide recommendations to improve the vision and eye health of the nation. The study will describe the challenges and opportunities to improve vision health surveillance, reduce disparities, and examine potential for public and private collaborations, among other topics.

Surveillance Project: In 2015, VHI funded a new cooperative agreement with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago to develop, test, and implement a vision and eye health surveillance system using existing surveys, as well as traditional and non-traditional data sources, to assess population estimates, trends, and health disparities related to vision health.

State Integration Project: In 2015, VHI partnered with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors to assess and develop the capacity of states to integrate vision and eye health into their public health infrastructure.



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VHI Activities and Contributions

Glaucoma Detection Initiative

VHI funded cooperative agreements with Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, PA and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD to develop novel strategies to reach people at high risk for glaucoma. These demonstration projects, working with community health centers and private practitioners, enhance detection of eye disease and adherence of care by developing new screening strategies and using patient navigators.

INSIGHT

The Innovative Network for Sight Research (INSIGHT) is a CDC-funded collaborative vision research network of investigators at Johns Hopkins University, The University of Miami, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Wills Eye Institute. INSIGHT focuses on evaluating system and individual level factors that impact access to and quality of eye care.

Improving the Nation's Vision Health

CDC's VHI convened a national expert panel on vision and eye health to develop Improving the Nation's Vision Health: A Coordinated Approach. This integrated public health framework identifies core elements of vision and public health including surveillance, identification of disparities and economic burden, and building state partnerships.

Vision Survey Module

VHI developed the first vision survey module to gather data on vision impairment, eye diseases, eye injury, and access and utilization of eye care services. This module, the only tool that assesses vision and eye health at the state level, has been implemented in 26 states through the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey.

Making a Difference

- Wills Eye Hospital worked with 44 community sites to provide glaucoma detection interventions to 1,649 people in two years.
- University of Alabama at Birmingham conducted comprehensive eye exams for 651 patients at two Walmart Vision Centers in two years.
- The four INSIGHT sites have provided diabetic eye screenings to 1894 people from underserved communities in one year using telemedicine.



Latest State Data

The VHI webpage provides quick and easy access to data, resources, and general information on vision and eye health. <http://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/>