

LEHP Mission

The mission of the Lions Eye Health Program (LEHP) is to empower communities to save sight through the early detection and timely treatment of diabetic eye disease and glaucoma and to encourage the appropriate treatment for low vision.

What Is LEHP?

The Lions Eye Health Program is a community-based public awareness program that allows Lions clubs, community organizations and individuals to promote healthy vision in the United States. It is a program made possible through grants from the Lions Clubs International Foundation, Eli Lilly and Company, and Allergan, Inc.

What Is the Need?

More Americans than ever are facing the threat of vision loss. As the population ages, it is estimated that the number of people with vision loss in the United States will double over the next twenty years.

People with diabetes are 25 times more likely to suffer from vision loss than the rest of the population and the longer a person has diabetes the greater the risk for retinopathy. There are approximately 18.2 million people in the United States with diabetes. Some one-third of those diabetics are unaware they have the disease.

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases in which the pressure inside the eye may or may not be elevated. If untreated, vision loss or blindness may result. With open angle glaucoma, the most common form of the disease, the normal fluid pressure inside the eye progressively increases.

Many people at high risk for glaucoma are unaware that they could be going blind. Glaucoma afflicts over 3 million people in the United States, but it is estimated that half of those are unaware that they have the disease. With early detection and timely treatment, most vision loss can be avoided. It is this group of people that Lions need to reach with sight-saving information through LEHP.

But raising awareness of eye health can help millions of Americans avoid the disability, loss of independence and diminished quality of life that accompany vision loss.

More than \$22 billion is spent annually on care and services for people who suffer from vision loss. These costs include treatment, education, loss of personal income and associated costs such as Social Security disability benefits.

LEHP Objectives

- To encourage the early detection and timely treatment of glaucoma and diabetic eye disease and the appropriate treatment for low vision. The CD-ROM provides a basic understanding of these conditions. If you would like more information, click on a link in the NEHEP partnership directory. There are many resources and organizations that can provide more in-depth information about eye health.
- To encourage people at risk to undergo a yearly dilated eye exam. Help educate people at risk for eye disease and encourage them to seek appropriate treatment.
- To establish community activities that promote awareness of eye health. These include distribution of eye health materials, vision screenings and eye health presentations.
- To increase awareness of the network of eye health organizations in the United States. There are many organizations that are concerned with diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma

and low vision and will be a useful resource for people with those conditions and for those interested in promoting eye health.

Working in the Community

Lions work within their communities to provide sight-saving information through a variety of activities, including:

- **Raising awareness by distributing eye health information.**
This is the most straightforward activity. Both individuals and groups can get involved in this effort.
- **Presenting eye health seminars.**
Educate your community about eye health by using the brochures, posters, videos and the PowerPoint presentations provided by LEHP. Seminars are most easily and effectively presented by a group or organization.
- **Conducting vision screenings.**
Screen those at-risk for eye disease. This is the most challenging and ambitious activity included in LEHP. It involves a great deal of planning, commitment from a dedicated team and coordination with local partners. This activity requires the organizational resources of a group or organization.

LEHP brochures, videos and posters help Lions increase awareness about glaucoma and diabetic eye disease. Lions clubs often partner with other community organizations and eye care professionals to expand their efforts. Currently in the United States, there are 2,800 Lions clubs in 32 states participating in LEHP. E-mail lehp@lionsclubs.org or complete the form online at www.lehp.org to order publications and publicity materials.

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