Prevent Blindness America Issues Call-to-Action to Make UV Eye Protection a National Health Priority

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 29 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Lawmakers were asked today to make protecting the eyes from ultra-violet (UV) rays a national health priority, specifically by increasing the prevalence of UV and eye-health messages coming from federal agencies, national leaders such as the Surgeon General, and in upcoming healthcare policies development. Representative Gene Green, Texas, Co-Chair of the Congressional Vision Caucus, provided the opening remarks and discussed the critical importance of making protecting our eyes from UV rays a national priority at a congressional briefing on "UV and Our Nation's Vision," hosted by Prevent Blindness America with support from Transitions Optical, Inc., through the Transitions Healthy Sight for Life Fund.

"The impact of UV rays on the eye health, productivity and quality of life of Americans is too severe to ignore, and is only going to get worse, with high exposure to UV in the environment and low awareness of the need to protect the eyes," said Rep. Green. "We need to help Americans see that protecting their eyes from UV is as important as protecting their skin."

Despite scientific research showing that cumulative exposure to UV rays can contribute to the development of sight-stealing diseases, such as cataract and macular degeneration, Americans do not protect their eyes the way they should. In fact, in a national survey(1), sponsored by Transitions Optical, only about one in six respondents said they wear sunglasses when they prepare for extended exposure to the sun and only approximately one-third said they wear a hat. This is likely due to a lack of awareness, given that, although 82 percent of respondents knew that extended exposure to the sun could cause skin cancer, only 9 percent knew it could damage vision.

The congressional briefing, held today, included presentations by several eye doctors, researchers and government representatives on the detrimental and largely pre
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