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The American Diabetes Association and Genentech Launch a Call to Action for Eye Exams to Prevent Diabetes-Related Vision Loss

Groups Launch the Eye Pledge to Raise Awareness and Address Inequity in Diabetes-Related Eye Disease

BIRMINGHAM, Al. (October 30, 2023) – The American Diabetes Association® (ADA), a sponsor of the 2023 Magic City Classic (MCC), and Genentech, anchor partner of the ADA’s Health Equity Now® program, launched the Eye Pledge to Fight Diabetes. This program encourages people with diabetes and their loved ones to get an annual eye exam, which have been shown to help reduce the risk of diabetes-related vision loss.

Diabetes-related eye disease affects around 8 million Americans and is the leading cause of vision loss for people aged 18 to 64. The ADA has partnered with Genentech to address the health inequities that drive the disproportionate impact of diabetes-related eye disease in Black and Brown communities.

“Diabetes and related eye disease disproportionately impacts under-resourced communities. That’s why we’re proud to partner with Genentech to raise awareness and provide support for people to get the care they need,” said **Charles "Chuck" Henderson**, CEO of the ADA. “Regular eye screenings and treatment can prevent 95% of vision loss caused by diabetes, and I encourage everyone to take the eye pledge, get an eye exam, and spread the word.”

The Eye Pledge to Fight Diabetes builds on the ADA and Genentech’s Health Equity Now partnership, which kicked off in 2023 with a pilot program in Birmingham, Alabama, an area with a high prevalence of diabetes and prediabetes. Over 568,000 adults are living with diabetes and 1,316,000 (nearly 35% of the population) live with prediabetes in Alabama. The program engages community and faith-based organizations to understand barriers to receiving care and to provide diabetes, health, and eye screenings in under-resourced communities in and around the MCC. By studying barriers to eye health care in Birmingham, the ADA and partners can use those learnings to drive change, not just in Alabama, but in under-resourced communities across the country.

“At Genentech, we deeply understand the challenges of vision loss and the impact it has on the lives of patients living with diabetes,” said Fritz Bittenbender, head of U.S. Public Affairs at Genentech. “That’s why the eye pledge is so important — it’s a simple commitment people can make with a big



Anchor Partner of American Diabetes Association® Health Equity Now®

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impact to help them protect their vision. I hope people nationwide join us in the fight and take the pledge.”

To take the ADA’s Eye Pledge to Fight Diabetes, visit diabetes.org/EyePledge.

About the American Diabetes Association

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation’s leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic and help people living with diabetes thrive. For 83 years, the ADA has driven discovery and research to treat, manage, and prevent diabetes while working relentlessly for a cure. Through advocacy, program development, and education, we aim to improve the quality of life for the over 133 million Americans living with diabetes or prediabetes. Diabetes has brought us together. What we do next will make us Connected for Life. To learn more or get involved, visit, diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Join the fight with us on Facebook ([American Diabetes Association](#)), Spanish Facebook ([Asociación Americana de la Diabetes](#)), LinkedIn ([American Diabetes Association](#)), X ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)), and Instagram ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)).

About Genentech

Founded more than 40 years ago, Genentech is a leading biotechnology company that discovers, develops, manufactures and commercializes medicines to treat patients with serious and life-threatening medical conditions. The company, a member of the Roche Group, has headquarters in South San Francisco, California. For additional information about the company, please visit <http://www.gene.com>.

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