The American Diabetes Association, with Visionary Partners VSP Vision Care and Regeneron, to Address Barriers to Accessing Resources to Manage Ones Eye Health

ARLINGTON, Va. (May 2, 2022) – There are currently more than 37 million American adults living with diabetes. Almost three times that many adults (96 million) are living with prediabetes and 90% are completely unaware. Anyone with diabetes is at risk for diabetes-related eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, macular edema, glaucoma, and cataracts. Some groups, however, are at a higher risk of losing their vision or going blind from diabetes, including Black Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. While genetic factors likely play a role in these health inequities, so do social, economic, and environmental barriers.

In observance of Healthy Vision Month in May, Focus on Diabetes™—a multi-year initiative that brings together the American Diabetes Association® (ADA) and Visionary Partners, VSP® Vision Care and Regeneron—is highlighting the importance of prioritizing eye health and sharing resources available for people living with diabetes and diabetes-related eye diseases. To help increase awareness in the community, the ADA partnered with their Focus on Diabetes Champion patient advocates—including Tiffani, Randall, Patricia, Natalie, and Rachael—to share their stories of living with diabetes throughout the month.

“Just as diabetes management is not a one-size-fits-all approach, neither is taking care of our eye health,” said Dr. Robert Gabbay, chief scientific and medical officer for the ADA. “This Healthy Vision Month, Focus on Diabetes is encouraging you to take control of your health. There are some easy ways to start, from scheduling an annual dilated eye exam, taking or sharing the ADA’s RetinaRisk™ calculator and Type 2 Diabetes Risk Test, and promoting resources in your area.”

“For the more than 130 million people with diabetes or prediabetes, receiving an annual eye exam is a simple and cost-effective way to help detect potential eye problems early,” said VSP Vision Care President Kate Renwick-Espinosa. “Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults aged 18–64, but it doesn’t have to be. In fact, early detection, timely treatment, and appropriate follow-up care can reduce a person’s risk for severe vision loss from diabetes-related eye disease by 95 percent.”

During this month, Focus on Diabetes will feature Champions on the ADA’s Instagram who will share details of their diabetes and eye health journey, as well as host a live chat answering questions from viewers through a Social Media Takeover and Be a Friend Friday (BAFF) events:

- Friday, May 6th: Tiffani Martin – BAFF at 12:00 PM ET
- Friday, May 13th: Randall Barker – BAFF at 11:00 AM ET
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• Friday, May 20th: Patricia Welter – BAFF at 11:00 AM ET

“For the millions of people living with diabetes, eye health is often overlooked. Healthy Vision Month serves as an important reminder that eye health is critical for people with diabetes,” said Johnathan Lancaster, MD, PhD, senior vice president, Global Medical Affairs at Regeneron. “We are honored to continue this partnership and reinforce our common goal in helping people understand that regular eye exams are critical to maintaining vision and possibly preventing vision loss in the future.”

For resources on how to manage ones diabetes and eye health, visit diabetes.org/eyehealth and follow along with us on social media at @AmDiabetesAssn on Twitter, Facebook, Spanish Facebook (Asociación Americana de la Diabetes), Instagram, and LinkedIn for various activations for Healthy Vision Month.

About the American Diabetes Association
The 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 81 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 to get involved, visit us at 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), Twitter (@AmDiabetesAssn), and Instagram (@AmDiabetesAssn).

About VSP Vision
At VSP Vision, our purpose is to empower human potential through sight. As the first and only national not-for-profit vision benefits company, this is what drives everything we do. For more than 65 years, VSP has been the leader in health-focused vision care. Every day, the people who power our complementary businesses (VSP® Vision Care, Marchon® Eyewear, Inc., Visionworks®, Eyefinity®, Eyeconic®, VSP Optics, and VSP Ventures) work together to create a world where everyone can bring their best vision to life. That means providing affordable access to eye care and eyewear for more than 85 million members through a network of more than 41,000 doctors. And it means expanding access to vision care to those disadvantaged by income, distance, or disaster. Through VSP Eyes of Hope®, more than 3.6 million people in need have received no-cost eye care and eyewear. Learn more about how we’re reinvesting in greater vision, health, and opportunities for all at vspvision.com.

About Regeneron
Regeneron is a leading biotechnology company that invents, develops and commercializes life-transforming medicines for people with serious diseases. Founded and led for nearly 35 years by physician-scientists, our unique ability to repeatedly translate science into medicine has led to numerous FDA-approved treatments and candidates in development. Regeneron is accelerating and
improving the traditional drug development process through our proprietary VelociSuite®
technologies, and through research initiatives such as the Regeneron Genetics Center. Visit
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