

May 26, 2009

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Paul A. Sieving, MD, PhD  
Director, National Eye Institute  
Bldg. 31, Room 6A03  
31 Center Drive, MSC 2510  
Bethesda, MD 20892-2510

Dear Dr. Sieving:

I write to congratulate you and your staff on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Eye Institute. NEI is at the forefront of leading research into treatments and cures for blinding diseases. While NEI's research, training, and health information programs aim to improve eye health for the people of the United States of America, these initiatives benefit the entire world.

NEI's research results and educational materials inform and guide national eye care services and the NGOs who support them, especially in the developing world. These countries have neither the capacity nor the resources to conduct this research themselves. With the current threats posed by glaucoma and the emerging rates of diabetic eye disease and AMD in the developing world, we will be depending even more on the NEI's research results to help guide our blindness prevention programming.

The National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) at NEI is a critical example of educational resources for individuals and communities, especially focusing on glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. NEHEP's materials have been utilized and adapted to developing country programs because of their thoroughness and ease of use.

Again, congratulations to everyone at NEI on this important milestone.

Yours sincerely,



Victoria M. Sheffield  
President & CEO