



The Eyes Have It

Baltimore's Visionary Fight Against Glaucoma

For Immediate Release
January 2, 2008

Contact: Cheryl Knauer
410-568-8808
cknauer@nevinspr.com

“THE EYES HAVE IT” PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN BALTIMORE CITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH NATIONAL GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH

**The Baltimore City Health Department, The Polakoff Foundation, and
Other Sight-Saving Organizations Join Together to Fight Glaucoma in Baltimore City by
Providing Glaucoma Screenings and Education**

*First Free Glaucoma Screening Takes Place Tuesday, January 29, 2008, at 4:30 p.m. at
Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital*

Baltimore – The Baltimore City Health Department, The Polakoff Foundation, The Maryland Society for Sight, Maryland Optometric Association (MOA), Glaucoma Research Foundation, Anne Arundel Eye Center, and Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital are teaming up to fight glaucoma in Baltimore City. *The Eyes Have It Program* begins in January to coincide with National Glaucoma Awareness Month.

Created by The Polakoff Foundation, the primary objectives of this first of its kind cooperative effort between City government and private enterprise is to assist in creating awareness of glaucoma and to offer free screenings to the citizens of Baltimore.

Screenings are planned monthly at four participating locations in Baltimore City, including Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital (2411 West Belvedere Avenue), Good Samaritan Hospital – Good Health Center – Conference Room A (5601 Loch Raven Boulevard), Bon Secours Urban Medical Institute (2600 Liberty Heights Ave.), and Harbor Hospital (3001 South Hanover Street). The first *Eyes Have It* screening will take place Tuesday, January 29, 2008, from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m., at Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital. No advance appointment is required.

The 2008 *Eyes Have It* screening schedule is below, as well as at the Glaucoma Screenings page at www.fightglaucoma.org. Baltimore City residents who are interested in being screened or have questions about the program can call 410-601-7295.

Month	Location	Date	Time
January	Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital	Tuesday, January 29	4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
February	Good Samaritan Hospital - Good Health Center Conf. Room A	Tuesday, February 26	9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
March	Bon Secours Urban Medical Institute	Monday, March 24	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
April	Harbor Hospital	Thursday, April 10	3 - 7 p.m.
May	Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital	Tuesday, May 13	4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
June	Good Samaritan Hospital - Good Health Center Conf. Room A	Saturday, June 14	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
July	Bon Secours Urban Medical Institute	Monday, July 14	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
August	Harbor Hospital	Thursday, August 14	3 - 7 p.m.
September	Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital	Tuesday, September 23	4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
October	Good Samaritan Hospital - Good Health Center Conf. Room A	Tuesday, October 14	4 - 8 p.m.
November	Bon Secours Urban Medical Institute	Monday, November 10	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
December	Harbor Hospital	Thursday, December 4	3 - 7 p.m.

Dr. Samuel Boles of Anne Arundel Eye Center is spearheading the effort to recruit volunteer doctors for these screenings. Interested doctors can volunteer by e-mailing Dr. Boles at samboles@gmail.com or by visiting the “Glaucoma Screenings” page at www.fightglaucoma.org.

“As a volunteer and board member of The Polakoff Foundation, I am honored to be a part of this worthwhile project,” said Dr. Boles. “I regularly donate my time to perform eye health exams in the community and urge other doctors to join me in this cause.”

More than 70 million people worldwide are affected by glaucoma. High-risk groups for glaucoma include those with a family history of glaucoma, those over 60 years old, African-Americans over 40 years old, people of Hispanic origin, and diabetics.

According to Samuel R. Polakoff, Chairman of The Polakoff Foundation, “There are a large number of Baltimore citizens who fall into the high-risk categories for glaucoma, which is why we feel it is important to educate and create awareness of this disease in the City. Many people with glaucoma do not know that they have the disease because it destroys eyesight without any pain or warning signs. However, glaucoma can be a treatable condition if caught early enough. The free screenings that we are providing will go a long way in the effort to fight glaucoma.”

In addition to the screenings, this program will help low-income, uninsured citizens who are found to have glaucoma by associating with programs and/or doctors who will provide treatment at little or no cost.

“This is a tremendous effort led by local foundations, hospitals, and ophthalmologists to make sure that uninsured Baltimore city residents do not suffer from preventable blindness,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Baltimore City Commissioner of Health. “We look forward to promoting this opportunity throughout the City.”

In addition to continuing to provide free screenings in Baltimore City, *The Eyes Have It Program* is looking for businesses, media, and faith-based groups to partner with to help spread the word and

defray costs related to the effort to fight this debilitating disease. For more information on becoming involved with this effort, visit www.fightglaucoma.org or e-mail srpolakoff@tbbgl.com.

Glaucoma is a set of eye diseases that affects nearly 70 million people worldwide and three million people in the United States. Glaucoma is called “The Silent Thief” as it often steals the victim’s sight without any obvious warning signs. At present, sight lost to glaucoma can never be recovered. Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in the United States.

About the Polakoff Foundation

The Polakoff Foundation is an all-volunteer, 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation, based in Forest Hill, Maryland. The efforts of the foundation concentrate on providing education and preventative screening resources to high-risk patients and those who are newly diagnosed. The Polakoff Foundation also sponsors organizations that are performing research in the quest for a glaucoma cure.

About The Maryland Society for Sight

The mission of The Maryland Society for Sight is to prevent blindness and preserve sight for Marylanders. The society works to achieve this mission with the Rosalie S. Sauber Preschool Vision Screening and Adult Vision Screening Programs, Mobile Eye Care for the Homeless Program, Eye Safety Program, and others. Founded in 1909 as the Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness, the organization advocated for the use of silver nitrate drops in the eyes of newborns, which led to the eradication in the early 1900s of “baby sore eyes” or ophthalmia neonatorum.

About Glaucoma Research Foundation

Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness. Founded in 1978 in San Francisco, Glaucoma Research Foundation works to prevent vision loss from glaucoma by investing in innovative research, education, and support with the ultimate goal of finding a cure.

About Anne Arundel Eye Center

Dr. Samuel Boles of Anne Arundel Eye Center is a glaucoma specialist and cataract surgeon. He received his medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia in 1988 and obtained National Board Certification in Medicine by the National Board of Medical Examiners in 1989. He is a Board Certified Fellow of the American Board of Ophthalmology. Boles founded the Glaucoma Co-Management Roundtable, which is dedicated to improving communication and education of glaucoma. He is also a board member of The Polakoff Foundation and The Maryland Society for Sight and performs free glaucoma screenings and eye health exams in the Baltimore area.

About Krieger Eye Institute at Sinai Hospital

In affiliation with Sinai Hospital, the Krieger Eye Institute is at the forefront of ocular disease research and patient care providing a full range of ophthalmic consultation services. The Krieger Eye Institute has a highly trained staff of ophthalmologists that provide the latest methods of surgical and non-surgical medical treatment of diseases of the eye, including glaucoma, strabismus, ocular tumors, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, retinal detachment, and cataracts. Other specialized areas include oculoplastic surgery for the correction of ptosis (sagging eyelids) and aging problems of the eye, orbital surgery, neuro-ophthalmology, pediatric ophthalmology and laser treatment for correction of nearsightedness (LASIK and PRK). Staff members are also committed to teaching and research with the ophthalmology residency program.

About Maryland Optometric Association

The mission of the Maryland Optometric Association (MOA) is to provide its members with the resources necessary to deliver the highest standard of professional care to the citizens of Maryland. A not-for-profit, voluntary association of eye and vision care specialists, MOA serves as the “Voice of Optometry” in Maryland.

###