



Winter 2010



Clarity

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Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Article by Dr. Dennis Cobler

There are many changes in vision experienced by our senior population, but the most common are cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Cataract surgery (removal of the natural lens and replacement with an implant) usually takes care of this particular problem so this leaves age-related macular degeneration to discuss. There are many types of age-related macular degeneration and each will give different symptoms.

The two basic categories of the degenerative process are commonly known as dry or wet macular degeneration. The dry type is the most common and is usually associated with the aging process. This usually starts out as a small blur when reading or watching TV and will progress in a slow fashion, or with a noticeable spot in your visual field which is not corrected by a change in your glasses.

To Learn More:

Call 888-939-9292

Or e-mail

info@welcomehomesmichigan.org

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VISION IMPAIRMENT



Glaucoma

Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness affecting more than 4 Million Americans.

Everyone from infants to seniors is vulnerable.



Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic Retinopathy is the leading cause of blindness among 20-64 year old individuals.

Everyone with either Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes is at risk.



Cataracts

Cataracts affect nearly 20.5 million

Americans age 40 and over. By age 80 more than half of all Americans will have cataracts.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration... Continued

To manage this dry type, you can take anti-oxidant multivitamins to maintain or slow the progression and using magnification visual aids to make the printed material larger than the small spot in your vision.

Wet macular degeneration is much less common than the dry type, but usually creates the most visual loss or distortion of vision. It is not totally dependant on the aging process, as its main cause is a blood vessel leakage or other fluid leakage in the back of the eye between the retinal layers. This leakage pulls the visual fibers apart creating a blind spot. This type of macular problem is serious and must be seen by a retinal specialist as soon as possible to minimize the extent of visual loss. They will determine what kind of leakage is present, and might use retinal injections or laser treatments to stop the leakage. Once the situation is stabilized, the low vision specialist can again use magnification aids to help with the every day vision needs. This wet variety typically takes much more magnification, as the vision is usually compromised to a greater extent.

If you have had problems with macular degeneration, regular glasses may no longer be the answer to your visual needs, but that doesn't mean you will not be able to do the things you did in the past. Low vision specialists can help. Any time you have to use special visual aids it may not be the way it used to be, nor the way you would like it to be, but you will be able to see. Low vision aids and the training that goes with it is available. Ask your retinal specialist or your regular doctor for a low vision evaluation.

This has been a rather simplified overview of a very common problem with macular degeneration and is just a brief description of both the disorder as well as a plan for management of the situation. As with any visual concern please contact your eye care professional.



*Dr. Dennis Cobler, Optometrist
Muskegon, Michigan
International Director,
International Association of
Lions Clubs 1998-2000*

Age-related macular degeneration is a progressive eye condition affecting as many as 15 million Americans, with 200,000 new cases each year.

For more information on Age-Related Macular Degeneration visit www.amd.org or www.preventblindness.org

Welcome
Heartland- Greenview
Our newest Affiliated Home



Lions Support



At Western Michigan Night, Lions Clubs donated more than \$6,000 to Welcome Homes Residential Services. Below: Rockford Lions President Dianna VanAntwerp (right) presented a check for \$2,600 to Welcome Homes Residential Services Lions Community Relations Director Nancee DeVogel (left) and Board Representative Duane Witter, PDG (center).



Lions clubs from around the state recently presented checks to Welcome Homes Residential Services to assist them in their mission of serving the visually impaired throughout Michigan. Pictured Above: Welcome Homes Director Brian Shepard (center) received a check from the Holt Lions Club for \$2,000 from Club President Tim Fauser (left) and Club Treasurer Kristin Moore (right).

Director's Note

Age-related macular degeneration is one of the many vision-related issues a Welcome Homes Residential Services client may experience. I had the opportunity to work alongside a vision rehabilitation therapist while visiting one of our clients with age-related macular degeneration. I will never forget the smile on our client's face after we showed her different ways to accomplish some of the daily tasks people without vision loss often take for granted – things like reading a credit card statement or writing out the check to pay it.

As Dr. Cobler mentions in his article on the cover, the use of aids and appliances can assist an individual experiencing vision loss. Providing training along with aids and appliances has allowed the client mentioned above – and many others like her – to remain in her own home while keeping her independence.

Providing training and education to help individuals cope with vision loss is an important part of the services Welcome Homes Residential Services provides. We work with certified vision rehabilitation therapists to help individuals learn how to use devices and assistive technology, as well as help determine the need for environmental modifications – particularly in the home. We also work with orientation mobility

Continued on back...

Lions Mid-Year Level Support

Perception: \$1,000-\$2,999

- Muskegon Northside (C1)
- Rockford (C1)
- Holt (C2)
- Laingsburg (C2)
- Ovid (C2)

Insight: \$500-\$999

- Harper Woods (A1)
- Fruitport (C1)
- Ravenna (C1)
- Sparta (C1)
- Algonac (D2)
- Harsens Island Lioness (D2)
- Marysville (D2)
- Central Lake (E2)
- Hale (E2)
- Oscoda (E2)
- Roscommon-Higgins Lake (E2)

Observer: \$250-\$499

- Clarkston Area (A2)
- Watervliet (B2)
- Casnovia/Kent City (C1)
- Dorr Township (C1)
- Grand Haven (C1)
- Grand Rapids (C1)
- Martin Lioness (C1)
- Muskegon (C1)
- Otsego (C1)
- Charlotte (C2)
- Fenton (D1)
- Empire (E1)
- Lake Ann (E1)
- Weidman (E1)
- Hart (E1)
- Northport (E1)
- Rogers City (E2)



Director's Note... continued

...specialists to teach safe and independent indoor and outdoor travel skills, including the use of a long cane, electronic travel devices, public transportation and sighted guides.

Not only do we work with these trained specialists to provide individualized training, we believe that training should extend to the caregivers as well. We now provide customized continuing education (CEU) trainings for our affiliated assisted living, long-term care and in-home care partners to help identify and address any vision-related issues or needs.

Check out the next edition of Clarity to learn more about our CEU trainings and read about another vision-related impairment.

Brian Shepard, Executive Director

Send your tax deductible donation to:
Welcome Homes Residential Services
500 Cherry Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
WHRS is a 501c3 organization

Contact Information:

Brian Shepard, Executive Director
bshepard@welcomehomesmichigan.org
616-771-9741

Nancee DeVogel, Community Relations
ndevogel@welcomehomesmichigan.org
616-771-9745

General information: 888-939-9292 www.welcomehomesmichigan.org

This newsletter supported in part by
Porter Hills Retirement Communities & Services and Gerontology Network



Serving the Visually Impaired

500 Cherry Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Annual Blind Dinner Date Guest speaker: Tom Sullivan



The Grand Rapids
Lions Club is pleased
to announce Tom Sullivan as the keynote
speaker for the 5th Annual Blind Dinner
Date to be held on March 11, 2010.

Sullivan is an accomplished actor, singer,
entertainer, author and producer. Sullivan's
best selling book, *"If You Could See What
I Hear"* is a testament to courage, a
competitive spirit and delight in life.

This annual event highlights local programs
that help individuals live with vision loss.
All proceeds benefit: Cherry Street Health
Services, Association for the Blind and
Visually Impaired, Ken-O-Sha and Welcome
Homes Residential Services. The event
will take place at the Grand Rapids Hilton-
Airport location.

**Tickets are \$75 and available through
Welcome Homes Residential Services.
888-939-9292**