



PRESS RELEASE

To: News Editors & Directors

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT KEY IN PREVENTING BLINDNESS CAUSED BY GLAUCOMA

Over 2.2 million Americans over age 40 have Glaucoma; only 1.1 million aware they have this potentially blinding eye disease

(Honolulu, Hawaii), January 3, 2007- With symptoms that develop slowly over time, over one million Americans are unaware they are living with, or at risk to develop, Glaucoma. To raise consciousness about the disease the American Academy of Ophthalmology has named January “Glaucoma Awareness Month.”

“Since patients with Glaucoma usually do not notice any symptoms or changes in their vision at first, it is essential that we take a proactive approach in treating this disease,” said Hawaiian Eye Center Medical Director Christopher Tortora, M.D. “Routine eye exams once every year are important in people at risk for glaucoma, as an ophthalmologist can often detect glaucoma before the patient even notices a vision change.”

Glaucoma is a condition in which the optic nerve inside the eye is damaged and the disease is often associated with elevated pressure inside the eye. If the pressure continues to build, it can cause varying degrees of vision loss and worst case, total irreversible blindness.

If diagnosed early on, the pressure inside the eye can be relieved through use of eye drops, laser treatments or surgery. Here on Oahu, Dr. Tortora and the staff of the Hawaiian Eye Center operate two surgical suites fitted with the most technologically advanced eye lasers and surgical equipment.

Typical symptoms of Glaucoma, if not caught early, include blurred vision, loss of peripheral vision, difficulty focusing on objects and presence of halos around lights.

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“Those most at risk for Glaucoma, who we would like to see at least once per year are any individual over the age of 50, African-Americans over age 40, patients with a family history of glaucoma and those who have experienced a serious eye injury in the past or who have another health condition, such as diabetes,” Dr. Tortora said.

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of The Hawaiian Eye Show, a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventive eye care. To learn more about other eye health issues, please call Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8448 where “*life has never looked better.*”

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