PRESS RELEASE

To: News Editors & Directors
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SIMPLE EYE PROTECTION AND EASY ERGONOMIC DESKSPACE CHANGES CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE WORKPLACE EYE INJURIES
Everyday more than 2,000 employees suffer eye injuries at work

(Honolulu, Hawaii), March 2, 2007- Each day across the nation, 2,000 workers suffer from eye injuries. Out of these injuries, it is estimated that between 10 and 20% will be disabling while 90% are preventable. To help reduce the number of injuries and vision-threatening accidents, the American Academy of Ophthalmology has named March "Workplace Eye Safety Month."

"The best thing you can do to avoid a workplace eye injury is take preventative measures," said Hawaiian Eye Center Medical Director Christopher Tortora, M.D. "If you work in an office, you will want to make sure your computer and work area are adjusted accordingly to minimize eye strain. For jobs, where hazards include flying objects, chemicals or radiation, for example, you want to be sure that you wear eye protection marked 'ANSI Z87.1'."

Many who suffer an eye injury at work were wearing insufficient eye wear or none at all. Statistically, jobs with the highest rate of workplace eye injury include the construction, automotive repair and manufacturing fields.

In today's workforce, more workers than ever find themselves working in front of a computer. If not adjusted correctly, many office personnel suffer headaches, eye strain and dry eye.

To minimize office related eye discomfort, there are a few simple adjustments that can make a world of difference to the eyes. First, workers will want to be sure their monitor is at a comfortable height so they do not have to tilt their head or bend their neck to see the screen. Optimally, the screen should be 17 or 18 degrees below horizontal, so the eyes actually look down on the screen.

In addition, the computer monitor and screen should be about an arm's length away to prevent eye irritation. If seeing the on screen text is a problem, the user should increase the font instead of moving closer to the screen.

A second tip that not many office staff may know about is that by sitting straight up in a chair at a 90 degree angle and directly facing the computer is actually bad for both posture and the eyes. Bifocal and progressive lens wearers can tilt both their monitor and chair backward to having the best position in relation to the screen and their chair.

Finally, periodic eye breaks approximately every 15 minutes, where the computer user looks away from the screen for a minute or two allows the eye to relax. Continual viewing of a computer screen for more than 15 minutes causes the eye to blink less often which then exposes more of the eye surface to the air. Finishing the eye break by rapidly blinking the eye will refresh the tear film and clear dust from the eye's surface.

"If you have tried adjusting your workstation and you still experience discomfort, it could be that you need to see you eye doctor for an exam and a simple adjustment to your eye glasses prescription," 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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