



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Photos Attached*

## **Diabetes and Your Eyes**

*(Honolulu, Hawaii)*, November 27, 2012 – It is estimated that around 26 million Americans have diabetes, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Diabetes can cause serious eye diseases including cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults aged 20 to 74. The American Academy of Ophthalmology has designated November Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month to remind those with diabetes to manage their condition to help prevent serious vision complications.

“Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes can cause major problems for the eyes by increasing the risk and severity of eye diseases, with diabetic retinopathy being the most common,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, M.D., Hawaiian Eye Center. “The National Eye Institute estimates that between 40 to 45 percent of those diagnosed with diabetes in the U.S. have some stage of diabetic retinopathy.”

Diabetic retinopathy affects nearly 7.7 million Americans 40 and older, according to the 2012 update of “Vision Problems in the U.S.” published by Prevent Blindness America. Diabetic retinopathy causes damage to the blood vessels in the retina located at the back of the eye. The disease can manifest itself in different ways from blood vessels swelling and leaking fluid into the eye to an abnormal growth of blood vessels on the surface of the retina. The leaking of fluid can lead to macular edema, which is the swelling of the macular area of the retina that is responsible for sharp central vision.

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Diabetic eye diseases often go undiagnosed until a major problem develops. With diabetic retinopathy especially, there are no symptoms in the early stages. It's important for those with diabetes to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. Those already diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy may need more frequent eye exams.

There are a variety of surgical options for cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. With early detection, proper treatment can be administered by an eye care professional to help control the effects of diabetic eye diseases and prevent blindness.

The best way to protect your eyesight if you have diabetes is to control your blood sugar levels. Keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol in check can also help minimize vision loss. It's important to consistently take insulin and other medications prescribed by your doctor. It's also important to maintain a healthy diet and regularly exercise. These small steps will greatly reduce your risk of diabetic eye diseases and other serious health issues like kidney and nerve disease.

"Diabetes affects many Americans, but it's a disease that can be controlled with proper diet, exercise and treatment," said Dr. Tortora.

*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 preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 or visit [www.HawaiianEye.com](http://www.HawaiianEye.com) and [www.Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter](http://www.Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter), where "life has never looked better."*

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