

PRESS RELEASE



TO: Editor in Charge
CONTACT: Janet Scheffer/Brandin Shim
Mana Means Communications, (808) 521-1160
DATE: November 9, 2017

For Immediate Release



November is Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month

(Wahiawa, Hawaii) November 9, 2017 – According to the American Diabetes Association, nearly 600,000 people in Hawaii suffer from prediabetes or diabetes. Diabetes can lead to diabetic eye diseases such as cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, which is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in American adults. November is designated Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness Month by the American Academy of Ophthalmology to “encourage those with diabetes to take proactive steps to protect their vision.”

“Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes can cause vision problems by increasing the risk and severity of eye diseases,” said Steven Rhee, D.O., cornea specialist at [Hawaiian Eye Center](#). “Cataract and glaucoma are familiar to most people but diabetic retinopathy is far less known despite how severe it can be. An estimated 40 to 45 percent of those diagnosed with diabetes have diabetic retinopathy.”

Diabetic retinopathy damages the retina’s blood vessels, located at the back of the eye, and can cause blood vessels in the eye to swell and leak fluid or cause abnormal growth of blood vessels on the retina’s surface. Leaking fluid can cause macular edema, or swelling of the retina’s macular area that’s responsible for sharp, central vision.

Diabetic eye diseases often go unnoticed until major damage has already occurred. If you suffer from diabetes, manage your condition and get a comprehensive dilated eye exam from your eye care professional at least once a year. If you’ve been diagnosed with a diabetic eye disease, you may require more frequent exams.

-continued-

Early detection is vital for diabetic eye diseases. Cataract, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy are treatable through a variety of medical procedures. Treatment provided by an eye care professional can help to control the effects of diabetic eye diseases and prevent blindness.

If you have diabetes, you can protect your eyes by:

- Monitoring your blood sugar levels
- Keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol in check
- Taking insulin and other medications prescribed by your doctor
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Exercising regularly
- Getting eye exams at least once a year

To learn more about eye health issues, visit HawaiianEye.com.

Christopher Tortora, M.D., and Steven Rhee, D.O., are board-certified ophthalmologists at Hawaiian Eye Center. Dr. Tortora and Dr. Rhee also host "The Hawaiian Eye Show," a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision broadcast live every Saturday at 8 a.m. on KHVH 830 AM. Hawaiian Eye's dedicated doctors and support staff 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 621-8448 or visit HawaiianEye.com. "For over 40 years, life has never looked better."

#