

REP. DAVIS RECOGNIZES GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH

WASHINGTON, DC (January 24, 2012) - U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis recognizes January as national glaucoma awareness month

I wish to take the opportunity to recognize January as National Glaucoma Awareness Month. Glaucoma is an insidious class of diseases that robs hundreds of thousands of Americans of their sight. The Glaucoma Research Foundation reports that over 2.2 million Americans have glaucoma, with approximately 120,000 American being blind as a result of the disorder.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness and accounts for between 9 percent to 12 percent of all cases of blindness. Glaucoma affects people of all ages but is more common among people who are middle-aged or elderly. As with many health problems, glaucoma disproportionately affects people of color, with glaucoma representing the leading cause of blindness for African American and Latino individuals. Research indicates that this group of eye diseases is 6 to 8 times more common in African Americans than Caucasian Americans. Those who are diabetic or severely nearsighted are further at heightened risk for developing Glaucoma.

Glaucoma presents few if any symptoms of its onset, with those affected can lose as much as 40 percent of their vision prior to noticing the vision loss. Unfortunately, there is no cure for Glaucoma; however, amazing advances are occurring to prevent further visual loss. Medications that slow the progression are critical and steps toward optic nerve cell regeneration are being made. I am proud that many skilled researchers in Chicago are working to advance the prevention and treatment of Glaucoma, including experts at Rush University Medical Center, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Northwestern University Medical School.

National Glaucoma Awareness Month is designed to raise awareness of this group of eye diseases and to encourage individuals to get tested. Given the lack of cure for Glaucoma, early detection is incredibly important. Thus, I lend my voice to the cause of raising awareness of Glaucoma and encouraging Americans to get regular eye exams to identify early any potential visual problems.