

# Connecting the Community | Patients' Stories

FEBRUARY 2019

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to use teleophthalmology to preserve the sight of the Wisconsin population, educate about diabetes and eye health, and develop future workforce.

## OUR STORY

We have a teleophthalmology system that allows us to screen clients in 8 minutes at their preferred locations such as community events, health fairs, churches and other events.



Eye Screening at the Milwaukee Health Department

## VISION LOSS PREVENTED, THANKS TO SCREENING

During our screening day at the Southside Health Center, we identified a **vision-threatening** case of diabetic retinopathy in an uninsured **33-year** old Hispanic male with Type II diabetes. After performing surgery on one eye and laser treatment on the other, the patient's vision was saved, and he can see his future clearly.

This is an example of identifying sight-threatening diabetic retinopathy in younger patient and saving his vision in both eyes before permanent damage could be done. However, laser surgery often cannot restore vision that has already been lost, which is why finding diabetic retinopathy early is the best way to prevent vision loss.

## SCREENING AT RESCUE MISSION

During our outreach screening at the Rescue Mission, we identified diabetic retinopathy in a 59-year old patient diagnosed with Type II diabetes for over 20 years. A nurse practitioner at St. Ben's clinic worked closely with Eye Care Associates to get an eye care appointment for the patient and help him receive a dilated eye exam, new glasses, and education on keeping his blood sugar levels under control.

People with diabetes are at risk for diabetic retinopathy and risk increases the longer a person has diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy isn't completely preventable, but risk can be greatly reduced. Studies show that better control of blood sugar levels slows the onset and progression of retinopathy and lessens the need for laser surgery for severe retinopathy.

## SAVING PATIENT'S EYE SIGHT

At the Health Fair, we screened an uninsured **49-year old Hispanic male** who had previous history of vision-threatening diabetic retinopathy in the left eye. Due to retinal bleeding, the exam could not be completed.

We referred the patient to the eye care specialist who treated patient with laser surgery and ultimately saved the patient's vision in his right eye. Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of blindness in American adults; if the patient had not opted to have a screening, his condition may have worsened, and he would eventually have lost sight in his right eye.

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*"This was great! Thanks again for providing this service"*

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