

## World Glaucoma Week 2020

### AEVR Educates During the American Glaucoma Society Advocacy Day



Featured speaker Paul Lee, MD, JD (Kellogg Eye Institute/University of Michigan, right) with Research to Prevent Blindness President Brian Hofland, PhD (left) and Acting Deputy NEI Director Mary Frances Cotch, PhD (center)

On February 26, AEVR's *Decade of Vision 2010-2020* Initiative held its annual *World Glaucoma Week 2020* Congressional Briefing, co-hosted by all major glaucoma societies and research organizations (see box right). Although held prior to the official *WGW 2020* (March 8-14), the event coincided with the American Glaucoma Society's Advocacy Day associated with its Annual Meeting.

Entitled *The Impact of Federal Funding on Glaucoma Research and Clinical Practice*, the event featured NEI-funded clinician-scientist Paul Lee, MD, JD, who serves as AEVR's Board President. Dr. Lee spoke about NEI's long history of funding research into glaucoma, a complex neurological disease affecting the optic nerve that causes vision loss—and ultimately blindness—with development associated with age, ethnicity, high intraocular pressure (IOP), and optic nerve structure. NEI research ranges from identifying the genetic basis of the disease to development of effective drug and device therapies to lower IOP.



Participants in the BVA's Research Week took time from their Congressional office visits to attend the Briefing. From left: BVUK's Dr. Renata Gomes, BVA Member First Sergeant Danny Wallace, United States Army (retired), Dr. Lee, and Don Overton, BVA's new Acting Executive Director.

### Prevent Blindness Emphasizes Importance of CDC Vision Programs



At the Briefing's end, Prevent Blindness Director of Government Affairs Sara Brown spoke after hosting patient advocates in Congressional office visits during the annual "All Eyes on Capitol Hill" Advocacy Day. Ms. Brown educated staffers

about the CDC's Vision and Eye Health Program and Glaucoma Program, especially as they inform NEI's research initiatives.

She reported that Prevent Blindness joined with 40 other organizations, including NAEVR, in signing onto a letter to the House and Senate LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee leaders supporting FY2021 Vision and Eye Health Program funding at \$5 million and Glaucoma Program funding at \$4 million. The letter stated that, "the Vision and Eye Health Program has been chronically underfunded, leaving the Agency unable to update national prevalence data on the most serious eye diseases and vision impairments."

### About World Glaucoma Week 2020...

The first *World Glaucoma Day* was held on March 6, 2008, and the House of Representatives passed H.R. 981, which recognized the event and supported the NEI's efforts to research the causes of and treatments for glaucoma. Since 2010, the day has expanded into a week of educational events held worldwide, with all major glaucoma professional societies and research organizations co-sponsoring AEVR's 2020 event, including:

- Research to Prevent Blindness
- American Glaucoma Society
- Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
- Glaucoma Research Foundation
- Optometric Glaucoma Society

### Research!America Releases Vision and Blindness Fact Sheet During World Glaucoma Week

On March 9, Research!America posted a blog by AEVR's James Jorkasky that recognized *World Glaucoma Week 2020* and linked to an updated Vision and Blindness fact sheet, which was supported by a grant from the Albert and Mark Lasker Foundation and prepared with AEVR's assistance. This edition reflects the third update of the original fact sheet that issued in 2004.



**DECADE OF VISION**  
an initiative of the  
2010-2020  
Alliance For Eye And Vision Research



### AGS Advocacy Day

NAEVR was pleased to work with the AGS in preparing NIH/NEI research funding messaging for its Advocacy Day, which complemented its legislative requests regarding clinical practice. The event included 74 advocates from 29 states who made 128 Congressional office visits. Dr. Lee and the Kellogg contingent visited the offices of Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), as well as Cong. Debbie Dingell (D-MI).



From left: Josh Stein, MD, Amy Brown, office of Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Paula-Anne Newman-Casey, MD, and Dr. Lee

