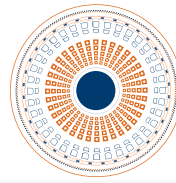
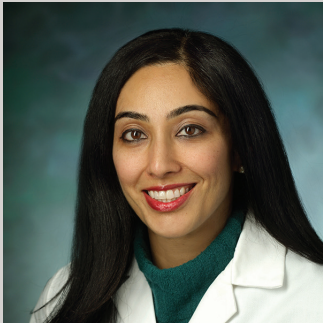


## EDUCATION

AEVR Recognizes *World Glaucoma Week 2021* with a Congressional Briefing Focusing on Optimizing Patient Outcomes



**RESEARCH SAVING SIGHT,  
RESTORING VISION**  
an Initiative of the  
Alliance for Eye and Vision Research



Mona Kaleem, MD

Wilmer Eye Institute/Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



Elyse McGlumphy, MD

On March 11, AEVR's newly launched *Research Saving Sight, Restoring Vision Initiative* held a virtual Congressional Briefing entitled *Glaucoma: Clinical Practice and Research to Optimize Patient Outcomes*. The event featured two clinician-scientist educators from the Wilmer Eye Institute at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine—Mona Kaleem, MD, who serves as an Associate Professor for Ophthalmology and Elyse McGlumphy, MD, who serves as an Assistant Professor for Ophthalmology—as well as patient advocate Amanda Eddy, who runs a woman-owned small business in Austin, Texas and is active with event co-sponsor Glaucoma Research Foundation (GRF).

Dr. Kaleem, who has previously participated in AEVR's *Third Annual Emerging Vision Scientists Day* held in 2017, explained how glaucoma leads to vision loss, often starting in the periphery and progressing into central vision. She described the disease's quality-of-life impact on patients, including their ability to read, walk, drive, conduct social interactions, remain independent, and have emotional well-being. She noted that reduction in IOP is the only known modifiable risk factor.

Dr. McGlumphy described how glaucoma is diagnosed after a screening eye exam through visual field testing, gonioscopy (an exam of the eye's drainage angle, the area at the front of the eye between the iris and the cornea, where fluid naturally drains out of the eye), corneal thickness measurements, and optic nerve imaging. She noted that the most common form of the disease is Primary Open Angle Glaucoma (POAG), where fluid in the eye builds up and causes damage since there is an increase in resistance to flow through the eye's fluid outflow system. This is treated by drug therapies and surgical interventions, including laser surgery or the insertion of a shunt to facilitate fluid flow. She also described Primary Angle Closure Glaucoma (PACG), a serious condition in which the eye's fluid outflow system becomes blocked, that is treated primarily by laser, surgery, and drug therapies.

Regarding research, Dr. Kaleem is focusing on creating a patient-centered system of care and trialing new treatment options, including injectable glaucoma medications and new surgical devices. She is also creating educational resources for patients and families and has joined with Harry Quigley, MD, also from Wilmer, in hosting a podcast for patients entitled *Diagnosis Glaucoma*, which is available with other educational materials at the Web site [DiagnosisGlaucoma.com](http://DiagnosisGlaucoma.com). Dr. McGlumphy, who is a guest on an upcoming episode, is focusing on surgical decision-making in glaucoma—that is, understanding the factors which influence the decision for a surgical intervention—as well as home measurement of IOP and collaborating with new companies in the development of implantable IOP sensors for continuous monitoring.

Dr. McGlumphy concluded by describing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on glaucoma patient care, noting an initial reduced clinical and surgical volume, with many patients lost to follow-up due to fear of attending medical appointments. Wilmer adopted various patient safety protocols and worked to individualize care for certain high-risk patients by measuring the pressure from the patient's car.

### About Glaucoma

Glaucoma, the second leading cause of preventable vision loss in the United States, is a neurological disease affecting the optic nerve and causing vision loss—and ultimately blindness. It affects more than 2.7 million Americans over age 40, with that number estimated to more than double by year 2050. It includes both diagnosed and undiagnosed cases, as often individuals are unaware that they have the disease until vision is lost. Certain characteristics such as age, ethnicity, high intraocular pressure (IOP), and optic nerve structure are associated with disease development. Groups at highest risk include African Americans over age 40, individuals over age 60, and those with a family history of the disease.



Amanda Eddy,  
GRF Patient Representative

In an interview with AEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky, Ms. Eddy, who currently serves as President of the Austin, Texas chapter of the Women's Jewelry Association, shared that her father went blind from glaucoma, so she was tested at three months and was diagnosed with the disease. She described her treatments—including drug therapies and surgical interventions—and her daily challenges in running a business and parenting a two-year old child. Through both laughter and tears, she related the uncertainty she faces every day regarding her vision but recognized the hope from research funded by the federal government and private funding foundations, such as GRF.

### About World Glaucoma Week 2021...

The first *World Glaucoma Day* was held on March 6, 2008, and the United States 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 2021 event, including:

- Research to Prevent Blindness
- American Glaucoma Society
- ARVO (which also provided streaming support)
- Glaucoma Research Foundation
- Optometric Glaucoma Society

AEVR's video Congressional Briefings held since mid-2020 are on the Web Site at [www.eyeresearch.org](http://www.eyeresearch.org)