

MD Support Joins with Organizations Around the World to Raise Awareness of Macular Disease

AMD Remains a Leading Cause of Vision Loss Globally

September 18, 2010 -- Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), which affects more than 30 million people worldwide, continues to be a leading cause of vision loss. The global cost of the disease according to a recent report by AMD Alliance International (AMD AI) is estimated at \$343 billion, underscoring the need for swift actions to raise awareness of prevention and treatment options.

During this year's AMD Week, which runs from September 18-26, MD Support, along with AMD AI and leading eye-care organizations from 25 countries, has issued a call to action to doctors, patients and caregivers through the public awareness campaign "Don't Surrender to AMD."

"This is a promising time for patients as preventative measures and effective, timely treatments have the ability to alter the disease tremendously," said AMD AI's Chairman Don Curran. "But macular disease is only as preventable and manageable as people are knowledgeable. Knowing the facts can significantly improve a person's chances of maintaining healthy vision and a better quality of life."

Losing vision has devastating consequences to an individual's daily life and those affected by the disease often suffer from severe depression and loss of independence.

However, those at-risk and AMD patients can take steps to reduce needless sight loss. AMD can be prevented or slowed down if a person takes action to keep his or her vision healthy. Along with regular eye tests, the first step is a healthy lifestyle, (Don't smoke, take exercise, eat healthily and use sunglasses in bright sunlight). Specially formulated vitamins for those affected by the disease may help, and effective clinically-approved treatments are available for the most severe form of AMD. In addition, low vision rehabilitation and support services can significantly help patients live with the disease and make the most of their remaining vision.

"AMD is a disease that we can prevent and manage," says Dr. Alan Cruess, Chairman of AMD Alliance International's Scientific Advisory Panel. "We have the ability to save the sight of millions of people each year."

Through its "Don't Surrender to AMD" campaign, MD Support is increasing public education efforts by informing the public of preventative measures, available treatments, and rehabilitation and support options that are available in the fight against AMD.

To learn more about AMD Awareness Week, visit:

<http://www.amdalliance.org>

MORE ABOUT AMD

Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is an eye disease that causes loss of central vision, leaving only peripheral, or side, vision intact. It usually does not lead to total blindness, but rather may cause foggy or blurred central vision and varying degrees of usable peripheral vision. Whether you have the more common "dry" (early) form of AMD, or the more severe (late stage) "wet" form, it is important to know the facts about AMD and what you can do to make the most of your sight.

If you take certain measures to keep your eyes healthy, you can prevent AMD or slow its progress. AMD Alliance International suggests taking the following steps to help prevent and manage AMD.

- **Get regular eye tests and manage your eye health.** Routine tests can help identify AMD and other eye problems in their early stages, when many eye diseases are more easily treatable.

- Don't smoke, eat a healthy varied diet, take exercise and use UV protective sunglasses in bright sunlight.

Understand the risk factors for AMD

- If you are 50 or older, you're at risk of developing the disease. Having a family member with AMD can also increase your risk.

- Smoking, a diet high in saturated fat, obesity, and high blood pressure are risk factors associated with AMD.

Ask questions and know your treatment options

Know your exact diagnosis and all available treatment options. Learn more about treatment options at:

http://www.amdalliance.org/en/100311_1236/treatments_overview.html

About MD Support

MD Support is a worldwide non-profit public service organization based in Grandview, Missouri and incorporated in 1998 under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Its mission is to provide information and support for people who are affected by macular degeneration and similar retinal diseases. MD Support is

based on the Internet and also offers a public awareness program designed to reach people who are without Internet access. Founding Director Dan Roberts and most of the organization's volunteers are visually impaired themselves. Their work is supported and guided by a 14-member professional advisory board made up of leading doctors, rehabilitation specialists, and social workers. The organization's web site receives over 4 million hits annually, and its International Low Vision Support Group affiliates are reaching more than 2000 "unconnected" senior adults monthly. MD Support can be reached on the Internet at:

<http://www.mdsupport.org>

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