



Alliance For Eye  
And Vision Research

**AEVR**

*Educating about the Value of Vision Research*

## **THE ALLIANCE FOR EYE AND VISION RESEARCH**

**In conjunction with:**

**AMD Alliance International**

**Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)**

**Lighthouse International**

**Alliance for Aging Research**

**Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research**

*continues its series of educational briefings on exciting new  
developments in eye and vision research*

*Please join us for a Luncheon Briefing*

***“New Developments into the Genetic Basis of  
Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)”***

**In Recognition of International AMD Awareness Week 2008**

**Tuesday, September 16, 2008**

12 Noon - 1:15 pm

**House Rayburn B-339**

**Please R.S.V.P. to**

**Dina Beaumont @ 202-530-4672 or [Dinabeau@aol.com](mailto:Dinabeau@aol.com)**

**Note: AEVR is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Educational Foundation hosting this  
widely attended event**

**Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR)**  
**Congressional Briefing Recognizing International AMD Awareness Week 2008**  
**“New Developments into the Genetic Basis of Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)”**  
**September 16, 2008**  
**12:00 – 1:15 pm, House Rayburn B-339**  
**RSVP to: 202-530-4672 or [Dinabeau@aol.com](mailto:Dinabeau@aol.com)**

**What is the latest research into the genetic basis of AMD?**

In a September 2005 AEVR Briefing, featured speaker Gregory Hageman, Ph.D., described the then-recent discovery of gene variants associated with a person’s risk for developing AMD, which was funded by the National Eye Institute (NEI) in conjunction with the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Variants of the gene Complement Factor H gene, and a couple of additional genes associated with the body’s inflammatory response, account for upwards of 75 percent of the overall risk for developing AMD. This research finding, which was cited by NIH Director Dr. Elias Zerhouni as a significant breakthrough, has enabled researchers to better understand the role of the immune system’s complement cascade in relation to the disease. **The briefing focuses on efforts to translate those initial genetic findings into strategies to prevent, diagnose, and treat this debilitating eye disease.**

**Why is research into AMD important?**

NEI reports that AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in older Americans, with almost 10 million individuals age 40+ currently experiencing intermediate-to-advanced stage of the disease. Currently, 200,000 Americans each year develop advanced AMD, and this number is expected to double by year 2020. AMD affects a part of the eye called the “macula.” In “dry” AMD, abnormal deposits of proteins called drusen form in the macula, and in “wet” AMD, new blood vessels grow into the same region, damaging this sensitive tissue. Since the macula is essential to central vision, AMD severely affects a person’s ability to read and drive, which has an enormous impact on productivity, independence, and quality of life. With the aging of the population, the direct economic and societal cost of AMD comprises an increasingly larger share of the \$68 billion annual cost to the United States of vision impairment and eye disease.

**Who will speak?**

**Gregory S. Hageman, Ph.D.**, a lead researcher in one of the four independent teams reporting the Complement Factor H discovery, will speak. He is a Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences and the Iowa Entrepreneurial Professor at the University of Iowa. Dr. Hageman is founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Ophtherion, Inc., a biotechnology company that has partnered with the University of Iowa and various commercial entities to develop diagnostics and treatments for AMD.

**About the Alliance...**

The Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (AEVR), a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation dedicated to education about the importance of federal funding for eye and vision research, is pleased to host this widely attended event in conjunction with:

AMD Alliance International  
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)  
Lighthouse International  
Alliance for Aging Research  
Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research