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SENATOR JIM JEFFORDS AND DR. NEIL BRESSLER PRESENT PATIENT PERSPECTIVES ON VISION

IN A CAPITOL HILL EVENT TO RELEASE A NEW VISION AND BLINDNESS FACT SHEET

During a January 25 Capitol Hill event to release a new *Vision and Blindness* fact sheet, Senator Jim Jeffords (I-VT) and leading ophthalmic researcher Dr. Neil Bressler (Johns Hopkins University) addressed the impact of vision impairment and eye disease on patients. The event was sponsored by the National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (NAEVR) and Research!America.



Senator Jim Jeffords

that, “the *Vision and Blindness* fact sheet makes very clear the reward that we all reap from society’s investment in vision research and how it is improving the lives of people every day.”

Dr. Bressler, a researcher in the area of retinal diseases, reported on his recently published study on patients’ perception of the value of vision (American Medical Association’s *Archives of Ophthalmology*, December 2004), sponsored by the National Eye Institute (NEI). Patients with the advanced stage of age-related macular degeneration (AMD, the leading cause of vision loss in older Americans) equated the ‘preference value’ for this condition to symptomatic HIV infection or chronic renal failure on home dialysis. “This is an important finding,” said Bressler, “as an additional 200,000 Americans each year develop the advanced stage of AMD, and this number is expected to double in the next twenty years. We must have a strong, continuing federal commitment to all laboratory and clinical aspects of eye and vision research within the NEI to reduce the magnitude of blindness in this country and around the world.”



Dr. Neil Bressler

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Bressler, who has a large international practice, is also a leading ophthalmic researcher in the area of retinal diseases, including age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.

The *Vision and Blindness* fact sheet, developed by Research!America in consultation with NAEVR, is the first vision-related fact sheet within the Research!America series entitled *Investment in Research Saves Lives and Money*. The fact sheet is available on the Research!America Web site at www.researchamerica.org and the NAEVR Web site at www.eyersearch.org.

“IT MADE ME AWARE OF HOW IMPORTANT VISION, AND VISION RESEARCH, IS TO MY LIFE” —SENATOR JEFFORDS

In recounting his own recent cataract surgery, Senator Jeffords commented that, “Over the years my own vision was becoming impaired. Then, about two months ago, I underwent a procedure to have cataracts removed and it has literally changed my life. It has also made me aware of just how important vision, and vision research, is to my life.” He added

Senator Jeffords serves on each of the Senate committees that has health policy as part of its jurisdiction, including the Finance Committee and the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, as well as committees on Aging and Veterans Affairs. Neil Bressler, M.D., is the James P. Gills Professor of Ophthalmology in the Wilmer Eye Institute at the



A capacity crowd attended the event in support of eye and vision research