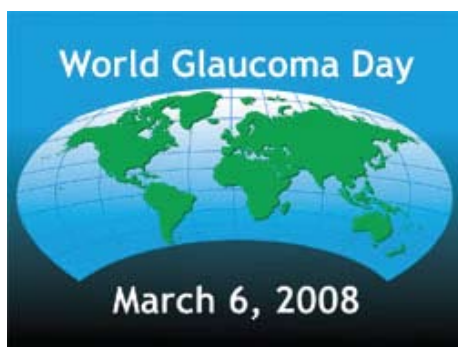


AGS Advocates for Glaucoma Awareness/Research in Capitol Hill Visits/Screening Event on the First-ever World Glaucoma Day

On March 6, members of the American Glaucoma Society (AGS) visited nearly 100 Capitol Hill offices to educate Congress about the incidence of glaucoma and the need for increased vision research funding. This first-ever AGS Advocacy Day—held on the first-ever World Glaucoma Day and in conjunction with NAEVR—was accompanied by a luncheon screening that included real-time optic nerve and pressure evaluation of the eye. These events represented two of the more than 300 events being held globally to expand awareness of the disease, which can damage the optic nerve and lead to vision loss. The glaucoma specialists and researchers focused on three important messages:

- **Increasing glaucoma awareness**
- **Urging support for House Resolution 981, sponsored by Cong. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Cong. Pete Sessions (R-TX), which recognized March 6 as the first-ever World Glaucoma Day**
- **Urging FY2009 funding for the NIH and NEI of \$31 billion and \$711 million, respectively, a 6.6 percent increase over FY2008 to match inflation and to begin to restore purchasing power lost over the past five funding cycles**

“The AGS members were articulate and effective advocates with a powerful message.” NAEVR’s James Jorkasky



“Although many of the AGS members had not previously visited Capitol Hill, they were articulate and effective advocates with a powerful message,” said NAEVR’s James Jorkasky who, with NAEVR Advocacy Manager David Epstein, accompanied the participants in meetings the entire day. “Members and their staffs were especially interested in how glaucoma is a ‘sneak thief’ of vision loss, often undetected until there is significant vision loss. That is why the accompanying screening event was so important in emphasizing the message about early diagnosis and treatment.”

Cong. Pete Sessions, a sponsor of HR 981, provided a welcome. “We need to be concerned about vision loss around the world. Even though the United States is a leader in eye and vision research, we still have many challenges in getting individuals diagnosed and treated for blinding eye diseases.” Cong. Gene Green (D-TX), a co-chair of the Congressional Vision Caucus, also attended the two-hour event, which drew a steady stream of staff.

NAEVR has posted events related to World Glaucoma Day in a dedicated section of its Web site at eyersearch.org



AGS President Robert N. Weinreb, M.D., Cong. Pete Sessions (R-TX), and Program Co-Chair Anne Coleman, M.D.



Foreground: Cong. Sessions participates in the screening



Dr. Weinreb and Dr. Coleman with Cong. Gene Green (D-TX), Co-Chair of the Congressional Vision Caucus



Arthur Sit, M.D. (Mayo Clinic College of Medicine), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and Thomas Samuelson M.D. (University of Minnesota)



Advocacy Day Program Co-Chair Ted Krupin, M.D. (Northwestern University)



NAEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky and Scott Christensen, President of the World Glaucoma Patient Association, which initiated World Glaucoma Day