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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Vision 2020/USA with Leading Vision and Eye Health Groups Urge U.S. Surgeon General to Issue Call to Action for the Year 2020**

***- Coalition Drafts Letter to Jerome M. Adams M.D., U.S. Surgeon General, to  
Help Lead the Charge to Improving Vision Programs,  
Access to Care, and More -***

**(Jan. 23, 2019)** – [Vision 2020/USA](#), along with allied organizations dedicated to improving vision and eye health in the United States, have formally asked U.S. Surgeon General Jerome M. Adams to initiate a “Call to Action” to mark the year 2020. A formal request was signed on by 27 national leading organizations – each a member of Vision 2020/USA – and was delivered on January 18, 2019.

In 2016, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) issued the report “[Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow](#),” providing a multi-stakeholder analysis of issues related to vision from a public health perspective, along with detailed recommendations for significantly improving eye health in the United States. A key recommendation is for a Call to Action report to be produced by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Office of the Surgeon General to motivate nationwide action addressing the increasing burden of vision impairment across the lifespan of people in the United States. [Surgeon General Calls to Action](#) are science-based summary documents intended to stimulate action nationwide to solve an urgent public health problem, typically across multiple sectors. This Call to Action would be used to increase public awareness, improve surveillance, clarify the disability and financial cost from vision loss, help standardize public health and clinical practice, and, ultimately, ensure that all people enjoy the lifelong benefits of healthy eyes and clear sight.

“Vision issues can effect anyone across the age spectrum, from infants to seniors, impacting everything from learning to the ability to work and be independent,” said Mitchell V. Brinks, M.D., M.P.H., chair of Vision 2020/USA. “With the help of U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams and his colleagues, we can work together to successfully address and improve vision health in our country.”

Groups signing onto the letter include American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Academy of Optometry, American Optometric Association, The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, Casey Eye Institute, Dana Center for Preventive Ophthalmology, Dean McGee Eye Institute, Eye Bank Association of America, Himalayan Cataract Project, Helen Keller International, Illinois College of Optometry, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness- North America Region,

International Eye Foundation, Lighthouse Guild, Lions Clubs International, National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research, Orbis International, Prevent Blindness, SEE International, SEVA Foundation, University of Utah- John A. Moran Eye Center, University of Rochester Medical Center, Vision Impact Institute, and Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity International.

“The NASEM report clearly outlined the need for, and benefits arising from, improving vision and eye health programs and services, as well as recommendations on the tactics to reach that goal,” said Kristan Gross, Global Executive Director, Vision Impact Institute. “We are proud to join in the effort to engage entities across the country, including professional groups, Federal, State and local governments, and more, to address the rising numbers of vision loss and impairment.”

To view the letter from VISION 2020/USA, please visit <https://www.iapb.org/news/vision-2020-usa-urges-us-surgeon-general-to-issue-call-to-action-for-year-2020/>. For more information on vision advocacy, education and public health efforts, contact The International Agency for Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) at [communications@iapb.org](mailto:communications@iapb.org) or visit <http://www.iapb.org>

### **About VISION 2020/USA**

VISION 2020/USA has been organized to better coordinate the efforts of the many US organizations (NGOs, academic, professional, and private) working in the field of blindness prevention, both nationally and internationally. VISION 2020/USA is committed to assuring the right to sight for all peoples both within the US and countries outside the US. Launched on April 30, 2009, nearly 40 organizations have come together under the VISION 2020/USA umbrella. VISION 2020/USA is the national entity within the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and its VISION 2020: The Right to Sight initiative. IAPB’s mission is to eliminate the main causes of avoidable blindness and visual impairment by bringing together governments and non-governmental agencies to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of sustainable national eye care programs. IAPB promotes VISION 2020, its joint initiative with the World Health Organization (WHO). For more information, please visit [www.v2020.org](http://www.v2020.org)

### **About Vision Impact Institute**

The Vision Impact Institute's mission is to raise awareness of the importance of vision correction and protection to make good vision a global priority. Its Advisory Board is comprised of five independent international experts: Pr. Kevin Frick (United States), Pr. Clare Gilbert (United Kingdom), Pr. Kovin Naidoo (South Africa), Mr. Arun Bharat Ram (India), and Dr. Wang Wei (China).

The Vision Impact Institute is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which receives support from the Vision for Life Fund from Essilor, the world leader in ophthalmic optics. The Vision Impact Institute hosts an interactive web platform, a unique data base of research, available at [visionimpactinstitute.org](http://visionimpactinstitute.org).

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