**USE EYE BANK LETTERHEAD OR ENSURE THAT THE EYE BANK’S LOGO IS USED AT THE TOP OF THE PRESS RELEASE**

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Over 48,000 Americans have their sight restored each year as a result of corneal transplants. **[Eye Bank]**, and its 87 accredited fellow eye banks across the country, provide the tissue that makes these life-enhancing procedures possible.

Unlike other organs and tissue, U.S. eye banks secure a sufficient number of corneas to avoid shortages or wait lists. In fact, in 2015, eye banks in the U.S. provided over 130,000 whole eyes and corneas for domestic use, to patients overseas, and for research and training that may lead to preventative and restorative treatments for vision loss and eye damage.

Without the generosity of over 70,000 eye donors each year, the above statistics would not be possible. Honoring their decision to donate their corneas upon death is the central aspect of the Eye Bank Association of America’s (EBAA) annual National Eye Donor Month commemoration.

First proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan in 1983, National Eye Donor Month promotes eye donation awareness and celebrates the lives of eye donors and corneal recipients. This year, Representative Nydia M. Velaquez will enter a proclamation into the record of the U.S. House of Representatives, declaring March 2017 as National Eye Donor Month. Past sponsors of these proclamations include Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Representative Alan Nunnelee (MS-01), a bilateral cornea recipient.

EBAA is the nationally-recognized accrediting body for eye banks. Since 1961, EBAA member eye banks nationwide have made possible more than 1,500,000 sight-restoring corneal transplantations.

Individuals interested in eye, tissue, or organ donation should access their state registry through the EBAA’s website; donor designation may also be made through state entities such as your department of motor vehicles.

Please contact Yolanda Raine, EBAA Communications Manager, at 202-775-4999, x118, or yolanda@restoresight.org, for further information about National Eye Donor Month or about EBAA.

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**About the Eye Bank Association of America**

*The Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA), established in 1961, is the oldest transplant association in the nation and sets standards, provides education, and engages in advocacy to support eye donation, and cornea transplantation and research. EBAA has led the transplantation field with the establishment of medical standards for eye banking, and comprehensive training and certification programs for eye bank personnel. Over 80 member eye banks operate in the United States, Canada and Asia. These eye banks made possible 79,304 sight-restoring corneal transplants in 2015. To learn more, visit* [*www.restoresight.org*](http://www.restoresight.org)*.*