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Contact: Colleen Bayus
EBAA Communications Manager
colleen@restoresight.org

Senator Ralph Alvarado Awarded Crystal Cornea Award by Eye Bank Association of America

Alvarado earns prestigious award for his advocacy efforts for corneal donation and transplantation and protecting the altruistic gift of sight.

Baltimore, MD—The [Eye Bank Association of America](#) (EBAA), the world’s oldest transplant association and nationally-recognized accrediting and standards setting body for eye banks, announced today that Kentucky State Senator Ralph Alvarado was the 2022 recipient of its [Crystal Cornea Award](#). The Crystal Cornea Award is a prestigious honor presented to an individual or organization from outside healthcare and eye banking, who elevates public awareness of corneal donation and transplantation and supports EBAA’s mission to restore sight worldwide.

“Senator Alvarado’s leadership in the passing of Kentucky Senate Bill 12 in 2021 to preserve the nonprofit nature of eye tissue donation in the commonwealth demonstrates his dedication to protecting the altruistic gift of sight for generous donors and their families,” said EBAA President & CEO, Kevin Corcoran. “Thanks to Senator Alvarado’s commitment to the integrity of donated corneal tissue, Kentuckians are assured that cornea donations are not treated as a commodity because for-profit entities are prohibited from procuring or selling eye or corneal tissue,” said Woodford Van Meter, MD, EBAA’s Immediate Past Chair and a corneal surgeon in Louisville, KY.

There are an estimated 12 million individuals around the world suffering from corneal blindness that could be corrected with a corneal transplant. There is no artificial cornea—the transplantation process depends on the priceless gift of donation from one human to another. Nearly anyone can be a cornea donor, as blood-type, eye color, vision quality, and age are not relevant to donation.

EBAA will present the Crystal Cornea Award to Senator Alvarado at the [2022 EBAA Annual Meeting](#) in Baltimore, MD during an awards dinner on Friday, June 3.

The Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA), established in 1961, is the oldest transplant association in the U.S. It sets standards, provides education, and engages in advocacy to support eye donation, cornea transplantation, and research. EBAA leads the transplantation field by establishing medical standards for eye banking, and comprehensive training and certification programs for eye bank personnel. Since EBAA’s founding, member eye banks have provided tissue for more than 2 million sight-restoring corneal transplants. To learn more, visit restoresight.org.