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**FORMER PRESIDENT CARTER AND AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCE  
INFANTSEE™ PROGRAM TO PROVIDE NO-COST INFANT EYE ASSESSMENTS**

*Survey Shows Mothers Unaware of Need for Early Evaluation of Infant Eye Health*

**NEW YORK (June 8, 2005)** – InfantSEE™, a no-cost public health program developed to provide professional eye care for infants nationwide, was launched today by the American Optometric Association (AOA), in partnership with The Vision Care Institute of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc. Under this program, supported by former President Jimmy Carter, who serves as honorary national chair and spokesman, participating optometrists will provide a one-time, comprehensive eye assessment to infants in their first year of life, offering early detection of potential eye and vision problems at no cost regardless of income.

Public health experts agree that visual development is most dramatic between 6 and 12 months of age and that early detection can prevent and help reduce the threat of serious vision impairments. In fact, one in every 10 children is at risk from undiagnosed eye and vision problems. However, a survey fielded by BabyCenter.com, on behalf of the AOA, reveals that nearly half of new and expectant mothers mistakenly believe that because a baby's eyes are changing and their vision is developing in their first year of life, it is best to wait until the child is older to get them screened by an eye care professional.

Further, while 97 percent of mothers said they do everything they can to ensure their children's health, only 13 percent of mothers with children younger than 2 years of age said they had taken their babies to see an eye and vision care professional for a regular check-up or well-care visit. This discrepancy suggests a lack of understanding about the importance of early intervention. If left untreated, eye and vision problems can impact learning and may lead to permanent vision impairment.

"As parents, we regularly take our children to the dentist to help prevent cavities. Likewise, we should take our babies to the optometrist to help prevent potential eye and vision problems," said former President Carter. "Given my family's experience managing vision problems that were not caught early, I

strongly encourage all parents with babies to visit an optometrist for an InfantSEE™ assessment during the first year of their child's life and I applaud AOA for providing parents this opportunity.”

The BabyCenter.com survey also showed that the large majority of mothers feel confident that their pediatricians have the time and resources to identify potential eye and vision problems. Actually, a typical well-child visit to the pediatrician, including care and services performed by all personnel, lasts an average of 22.1 minutes,<sup>1</sup> which is effective for detecting only readily identifiable eye problems. Significant risk factors to eye and vision disorders, however, are typically not detectable by base-level infant eye screenings, and even early retinoblastoma (the seventh most common pediatric cancer) is detected more than 80 percent of the time by a family member or friend, as opposed to a health care professional.

“Optometrists, through their clinical education, training and experience, have the means to provide the most effective primary eye and vision services to children, as a complement to routine well-care exams given by pediatricians,” said Scott Jens, O.D., F.A.A.O. and InfantSEE™ chairman. “The AOA and InfantSEE™ volunteer optometrists look forward to working with pediatricians to offer expanded eye care to infants nationwide.”

Although infants cannot respond verbally, the first year of life is an ideal time to conduct an extensive eye assessment. Not only is this a critical time for eye and vision development, but generally children at this age do not yet fear doctor visits and find the assessment painless and often enjoyable. Typically, infants sit on their parent's lap during the assessment, in which the optometrist uses lights and other hand held objects to check that their eyes are working together and that there are no significant refractive issues that will impede proper vision development. The optometrist may also use drops or a spray to dilate the baby's pupils to ensure the health of the eye.

As part of the national launch, former President Carter will issue a call-to-action through a public service announcement (PSA), which will educate parents about InfantSEE™ and urge them to take advantage of the program. The PSA cites his personal experience regarding his grandchildren's eye problems. His granddaughter was diagnosed and treated as a toddler for amblyopia, often referred to as lazy eye, a leading cause of vision loss in people younger than 45, which will affect one in 30 children. His grandson's amblyopia was not identified until grade school and may never be fully corrected.

To learn more about InfantSEE™, call toll-free (888) 396-EYES (3937) or visit [www.infantsee.org](http://www.infantsee.org).

### **Survey Methodology**

BabyCenter.com completed 543 online surveys among moms with children under 2 and/or pregnant women. Data was collected in March 2005 and took four to six minutes to complete.

### **About the American Optometric Association**

American Optometric Association doctors of optometry are highly qualified, trained doctors, on the frontline of eye health and vision care, who examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases and disorders of

the eye. In addition to providing eye and vision care, optometrists play a major role in an individual's overall health and well-being by detecting systemic diseases. Doctors of optometry have the skills and training to provide more than two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States. The American Optometric Association represents more than 34,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians in nearly 6,500 communities across the country. For more information, visit [www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org).

### **About Vision Care Institute**

The Vision Care Institute of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care Inc. is an innovative educational resource created to prepare optometry students for a successful transition into the real world of delivering quality eye care, as well as to assist practicing Eye Care Professionals in the growth and development of their practice. The state-of-the-art facility gives participants a rare opportunity to gain first-hand experience with the latest in vision diagnostic and treatment technologies through hands-on contact lens instruction. Besides clinical training, participants also concentrate on communication skills. The curriculum, taught by leading eye care practitioners from around the country, gives participants the skills and confidence necessary to excel in today's professional practice. The Vision Care Institute has hosted students from all 19 of the schools and colleges of optometry throughout North America at its headquarters in Jacksonville, Florida.

### **About BabyCenter.com**

Founded in 1997, BabyCenter operates [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com), the most visited online resource for new and expectant parents, [www.parentcenter.com](http://www.parentcenter.com), the leading online resource for parents of children ages 2 to 8, and [www.babycentre.co.uk](http://www.babycentre.co.uk), the leading U.K. resource for new and expectant parents. Offering extensive, medical advisory board-approved content, BabyCenter's Web sites attract over 3.5 million visitors each month, as measured by comScore Media Metrix, and have been honored with numerous awards, including the 2005 People's Voice Webby Award for Best Family/Parenting Web site. In addition, the BabyCenter sites offer an array of interactive tools, a supportive online community, a premium subscription service, and an online store featuring thousands of products for parents and children.

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<sup>1</sup> "Socioeconomic Survey of Pediatricians," American Academy of Pediatricians. Accessed at <http://www.aap.org/research/periodicsurvey/ps43soci.htm#3d> on April 5, 2005.