



**FOR RELEASE ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17**

**Contact:** Julie Mahoney  
American Optometric Association  
(314) 991-4100 x4176  
JMMahoney@aoa.org

Madonna Duncan  
Hill & Knowlton  
(312) 255-3143  
madonna.duncan@hillandknowlton.com

***ND OPTOMETRISTS PARTNER WITH U.S. SENS. CONRAD AND DORGAN, REP. POMEROY AND GOV. HOEVEN IN IMPROVING INFANT EYE AND VISION CARE***  
*No-cost, comprehensive eye and vision assessments provided by InfantSEE® Program*

**Bismarck, N.D. (February 17, 2009)** – Due to the overwhelming number of children with eye and vision problems across the United States, Bismarck and surrounding area optometrists are devoting appointments to no-cost, comprehensive eye and vision assessments for infants between six to 12 months of age through InfantSEE®. InfantSEE®, a public health program developed by the American Optometric Association (AOA) in partnership with The Vision Care Institute™, LLC a Johnson & Johnson company, was designed to provide professional eye care for infants nationwide at no-cost, regardless of family income or number of eligible children.

“I can’t stress enough the importance of early childhood health screenings,” said Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND). “I encourage parents across North Dakota to take advantage of the InfantSEE® program. Have your child assessed in order to detect and treat any potential vision problems before they interfere with their learning.”

“As parents, we regularly take our children to the dentist to help prevent cavities. Likewise, we should have our children’s vision screened at an early age to prevent potential eye and vision problems down the road,” said Congressman Earl Pomeroy (D-ND). “I applaud our local optometrists for providing free InfantSEE® assessments, and encourage families to take advantage of this useful service.”

To encourage parents to take advantage of the InfantSEE® program and to help protect infant vision and eye health, Governor John Hoeven has officially declared Monday, February 23 through Friday, February 27 InfantSEE® Week in the state of North Dakota.

“Protecting infant vision and eye health is an integral part of North Dakota’s commitment to the health and wellness of our children,” Hoeven said. “I commend the North Dakota Optometric Association and optometrists across the state for providing this important program to North Dakota families.”

One in 10 children are at risk from undiagnosed eye and vision problems, which, if undetected, could lead to permanent vision impairment, and in rare cases, life-threatening health risks. However, only 14 percent of children from infancy to age six have had a comprehensive eye assessment from an eye care professional. In Bismarck and surrounding areas, great strides are being made to ensure that potential eye and vision problems are detected early. Infant eye assessments have been available in North Dakota since the InfantSEE® program launched in 2005.

“Many parents are surprised to learn that the first year of life is one of the most critical stages of a child’s visual development,” said Dr. Danelle Moch, a Bismarck-area optometrist and InfantSEE® provider. “It’s the ideal time to detect eye and vision problems before these conditions worsen or cause developmental delays.”

The program launched in 2005 with support from former President Jimmy Carter, honorary national chair. Nearly 8,000 optometrists nationwide volunteer their time to provide assessments to babies in their communities. The majority of vision problems detected included retinoblastoma (eye cancer), severe hyperopia (farsightedness), myopia (nearsightedness), congenital glaucoma and congenital cataract.

“As a special education teacher, I know the importance of identifying developmental issues early,” said Mary McCarvel-O’Connor, local mother of Illyana. “I encourage all parents to take advantage of the InfantSEE® program. I brought my daughter for an InfantSEE® assessment when she was six months old and was relieved to find out her vision was healthy.”

To continue to improve infant eye assessment rates in Bismarck and surrounding areas, the following eye care providers will offer no-cost InfantSEE® eye assessments from February 23 to 27, by appointment:

**BISMARCK**

Dr. Brian C. Beattie  
Dr. Eve L. Kostelecky  
2331 Tyler Park Suite 2  
701-258-4384

Dr. Shanon S. Bencker  
738 Kirkwood Mall  
701-258-8810

Dr. Thomas L. Deis  
Dr. Keith L. Schindler  
204 West Century Ave.  
701-255-0186

Dr. Todd A. Kelsch  
210 West Front Ave.  
701-222-2461

Dr. Danelle F. Moch  
1221 West Divide Ave., Suite 1  
701-224-0661

Dr. Taya M. Patzman  
2821 Rock Island Place  
701-222-1140

Dr. Thomas J. Samson  
200 South 5th Street  
701-222-3937

Dr. Tim Tello  
1221 West Divide Ave. Ste. 1  
701-224-0661

**MANDAN**

Dr. James A. Helmers  
Dr. John N. Helmers  
Dr. Daniel J. Long  
113 3rd Ave. NW  
701-663-2020

Dr. Daniel C. Little  
Dr. Terry Schmidt  
107 6th Ave. NW  
701-663-0313

**BOTTINEAU**

Dr. Paul Dunderland  
522 Main Street  
701-228-2219

**CARRINGTON**

Dr. Kathy M. Hendrickson  
110 9th Ave. South  
701-652-2020

**DEVILS LAKE**

Dr. Craig A. Bratvold  
211 4th Street NE, Ste. 1  
701-662-2817

Dr. Carey L. Enderle

Dr. Kyle D. Krein

Dr. Mark A. Moen

404 Highway 2 East

701-662-4085

Formatted: Norwegian (Bokmål)

**DICKINSON**

Dr. Nate Shilman

448 21st Street, Ste. D-1

701-225-7886

**FARGO**

Dr. Angela K. Darveaux

3902 13th Ave. South, Ste. 406

701-281-3084

Dr. Kristin F. Engstrom

4731 13th Ave. South

701-281-2746

Dr. Shari L. Kensok

3051 25th Street South #K2

701-234-0766

Dr. Lori Scheel

1702 South University Drive

701-364-6116

**GRAFTON**

Dr. Michelle K. Carter

415 Hill Ave.

701-352-1370

**GRAND FORKS**

Dr. David Biberdorf

2200 South Washington Street

701-775-3135

Formatted: Norwegian (Bokmål)

Dr. Kari E. Torkelson

Dr. Jeffery B. Yunker

2900 South Columbia Rd.

701-746-6745

Dr. Jason Schaff

2200 South Washington

701-775-3135

**HARVEY**

Dr. Steve Kourajian

901 Lincoln Ave.

701-324-2154

**LANGDON**

Dr. Richard H. Eklof  
324 9th Ave., Ste. 1  
701-256-2269

**LISBON**

Dr. Corey R. Mairs  
17 11th Ave. West  
701-683-5815

**MINOT**

Dr. Jason Bradley  
207 South Main Street  
701-852-5626

Dr. Bruce A. Moen  
1100 31st Ave. SW, Ste. 2  
701-837-0022

Dr. Robert P. Nyre  
10 1st Street SW  
701-852-2020

**OAKES**

Dr. Geoffrey A. Rath  
409 West Main  
701-742-3111

**PARK RIVER**

Dr. Dori M. Carlson  
Dr. Mark K. Helgeson  
121 Briggs Ave. North  
701-284-7330

**WAHPETON**

Dr. William Welder  
315 North 11th Street, Ste. A  
701-642-4090

**WATERFORD CITY**

Dr. Douglas Nordby  
109 5th Street SW  
701-444-3221

**DILWORTH, MN**

Dr. Becky McIlonie  
415 34th Street North  
218-233-9839

InfantSEE® assessments are complementary to the routine well-care exams a baby receives from a pediatrician or family physician. Optometrists have the training to identify areas of risk that are critical to vision development and the skills to identify conditions that might not be detected in a routine pediatric wellness exam. In some cases, conditions may need to be monitored, immediately treated or referred to a pediatric eye specialist.

To learn more about InfantSEE®, visit [www.InfantSEE.org](http://www.InfantSEE.org).

#### ***About InfantSEE®***

InfantSEE® is a public health program managed by Optometry's Charity™ — the AOA Foundation. Designed to ensure that eye and vision care become an integral part of infant wellness and improve a child's quality of life, doctors of optometry provide one eye and vision assessment to infants free-of-charge regardless of socioeconomic status. For more information visit [infantsee.org](http://infantsee.org).

#### ***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 36,000 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 The 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.

###