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**ST. LOUIS METRO AREA OPTOMETRISTS PARTNER WITH SEN. BOND; U.S. HOUSE LEADERS IN IMPROVING INFANT EYE AND VISION CARE**

*No-cost, comprehensive eye and vision assessments provided by InfantSEE® Program*

**St. Louis, Mo. (June 1, 2009)** – Due to the overwhelming number of children with eye and vision problems across the United States, St. Louis Metro 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 Optometry’s Charity™ - The AOA Foundation 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.

“Unfortunately I know all too well just how important early identification is since a condition that went undiagnosed when I was a child has led to permanent vision loss in my right eye,” said U.S. Senator Kit Bond (R-Mo.). “Through their work with the InfantSEE® program, Missouri’s optometrists are an important part of the solution to helping children across the state avoid conditions like mine. This year I was proud to reintroduce with Senator Dodd the “Vision Care for Kids Act” to combat undiagnosed and untreated vision problems in children. Support by Missouri’s optometrists has been critical and I will continue to work with the vision community to bring attention to this important issue.”

Leading members of the U.S. House of Representatives delegation from Missouri have also expressed their support for the InfantSEE® program. Reps. Todd Akin (R- Mo.) and Russ Carnahan (D-Mo.) [urged local parents to have their infant’s eyes assessed during InfantSEE® Week.](#)

To encourage parents to take advantage of the InfantSEE® program and to help protect infant vision and eye health, Mayor Francis G. Slay has officially declared Monday, June 8 through Friday, June 12 InfantSEE® Week in the St Louis Metro Area.

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 the St. Louis Metro Area, great strides are being made to ensure that potential eye and vision problems are detected early. Infant eye assessments have been available in Missouri 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. Thomas Cullinane, a St. Louis-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 parent, one of my biggest concerns is making sure my child’s development is on track,” said Christie Burdek, local mother of Ben, now age 3½. “Ben was diagnosed with infantile glaucoma and myopia through the InfantSEE® program. However, early detection and treatment helped stabilize his condition. Now, Ben is exposed to a whole new world, with so many sights to explore.”

To continue to improve infant eye assessment rates in the St. Louis Metro Area, the following eye care providers will offer no-cost InfantSEE® eye assessments from June 8 – 12, by appointment:

**Arnold**

Dr. Diane Wilson  
1235 Water Tower  
636-296-8612

**Creve Coeur**

Dr. Thomas Cullinane  
12619 Olive Blvd.  
314-579-0909

**Ellisville**

Dr. Gary DeLancey  
113 Old State Rd  
636-256-7800

**Florissant**

Dr. Paul Whitten  
875 St. Francois  
314-839-2400

**Maryland Heights**

Fox Eye Care Professionals  
2037 Dorsett Village Rd  
314-205-9797

**O'Fallon**

Dr. Robert Goerss  
Dr. Erin Gagnon  
302 E. Pitman St.  
636-272-1444

Regional Eyecare Assc.  
3013 Winghaven Blvd  
636-561-3937

**St. Charles**

Dr. Angela MacDonald  
1592 Country Club Plaza Dr.  
636-949-2900

**St. Louis**

Barbara Aalbers  
621 S. New Ballas Rd.  
314-251-6430

Dr. Michael Antoine  
2493 St. Louis Galleria  
314-862-1525

Dr. Thebe Bagwasi  
3270 Telegraph Rd.  
314-845-3164

Dr. Cheryl Davidson  
12401 Olive Blvd., #206  
314-628-9100

Dr. Frank Fontana  
16 Hampton Village Plaza, Ste. 249  
314-353-6171

Dr. Ralph Garzia  
8100 Natural Bridge Rd. c/o UMSL  
314-516-5358

Dr. Steven Rosen  
474 Crestwood Plaza  
314-968-3660

Dr. Sara Schmitz  
2533 Woodson  
314-423-3874

Dr. Erin Sullivan  
621 S. New Ballas Rd., # 5006B  
314-432-5478

Dr. Jeffrey Weaver  
7800 Natural Bridge Rd. c/o UMSL  
314-516-5131

**Town & Country**

Dr. Lisa Dibler  
171 Lamp and Lantern Vlg.  
636-527-8877

**Troy**

Dr. Kurt Finklang  
Dr. Rachel Merriman  
84 Professional Pkwy  
636-528-2020

**Webster Groves**

Dr. Cheryl Davidson  
7954 Big Bend Blvd  
314-628-9100

**Wentzville**

Dr. Matt Wickham  
Dr. Lisa Mackey  
1776 Crosswinds Dr.  
636-327-8433

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) or call 888-396-3937.

***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.

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