



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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William B. Icenhower, MD, MPH, Health Officer
21580 Peabody Street,
Leonardtown, MD 20650

Contact: Leslie Payne,
Public Information Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Telephone: 301-475-4318

Fax: 301-475-4350

E-mail: paynel@smhd.com

HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND LIONS CLUBS PARTNER TO PROVIDE EYE CARE

LEONARDTOWN, MD (February 16, 2006) – St. Mary's County Health Department and five local Lions organizations are teaming up to expand local Lions Clubs' Sight Conservation Program. The Clear Sight Partnership will provide free eye care and eye glasses to eligible adults in St. Mary's County to help them experience better health.

The Health Department is providing \$16,000 for the program over three years. The health department is keeping its pledge to use portions of last year's Chesapeake - Potomac Home Health Agency disbursement to identify public health challenges and enhance services that directly impact people's health in these areas. One health challenge for the adult population of the county is the availability of insurance coverage to pay for eye care and glasses, according to the health department.

"I am pleased to report that the money from our partnership in the Chesapeake - Potomac Home Health Agency will go back to the community, through a new community partnership formed with local Lions Clubs," said William B. Icenhower M.D., health officer. "The Lions Clubs are ideal partners in this project due to their commitment to sight conservation and community service."

Lions Clubs in Hollywood, Leonardtown, Lexington Park, Mechanicsville, and Ridge and Valley Lee are participating.

"The Lions Clubs have long believed that clear eyesight should be available to everyone, regardless of ability to pay," said Bob Jackson, Lions Club zone chairman. "Each of our clubs has been active promoting sight conservation within its boundaries." The partnership will expand each of the five local Lions Clubs' efforts to stretch limited

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resources used to provide eye care and glasses for people in its community. Added funds will not only help fulfill the need for adults, they will also free up existing club funds to provide additional support for children's needs, according to Jackson.

People who are in need of eye care and glasses, and don't have adequate insurance coverage for this need, should seek information about the Clear Sight Program through the health department or their local Lions Club. Information about the program and eligibility guidelines is available at 301-475-4316. After an initial screening, requests will be forwarded to the Lions Club serving the caller's community. The club will provide vouchers for eye care and glasses available through established partner providers in St. Mary's County.

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