

## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Eye screening services supported by SHWF in partnership with Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

March 27, 2014 - The Project BEST (Better Eye Services and Treatment) unit of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) is entering its fourth year of partnership with the Salem Health and Wellness Foundation to provide eye screening services to the residents of Salem County. CBVI is part of the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

A grant from the Foundation facilitated this collaboration to develop a site for screenings for the general population, early childhood school settings (through age 6 years), and migrant workers. The number of people served has increased from 700 to over 1,100 in this short period resulting directly from mutual creativity in finding other venues and publicizing the program. There are now two established sites (the South Jersey Family Medical Center and the YMCA in Carney's Point). In addition, migrant workers are seen at the Medical Center as well as farms to ensure that other medical needs associated with vision loss may also be addressed. Several schools receive services, including the addition of those serving children with special needs. Screenings have become a fixture at the health fairs and will expand into senior housing facilities in the upcoming year.

The intent of Project BEST is to identify people with reduced vision and to provide assessment and treatment within the community. Those meeting the eligibility criteria of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired are also offered the opportunity to become consumers of the Agency and receive its vast array of blindness training services including the Education unit, serving students through high school, Transition services for those either attending college or entering employment, Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling for those seeking or maintaining employment, and Independent Living services. The Agency provides instruction in the areas of Activities of Daily Living, assistive technology and Orientation and Mobility. Eye Health Nurses are available to enable individuals to better manage their health conditions.

Daniel Frye, Executive Director of CBVI states, "We are pleased to continue our ongoing partnership with the Salem Health and Wellness Foundation. Project BEST offers assurance to many that their eye-health is good and stable while referring others with

emerging vision difficulties to resources that may help mitigate the challenges of vision loss and enable people to function independently with limited or no sight whatsoever. This is a project that has advantages for everybody.”

Upcoming screenings will be held at the South Jersey Medical Center on the third Thursday of every month from 4:00 PM – 7:00PM as well as at the YMCA at Carney’s Point on April 1, June 3, August 5, October 12 and December 2, 2015 from 1:00PM to 5:00 PM.

For further information, please call (973) 648-7400.

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