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## National Glaucoma Month Exposes ‘Silent Sight Thief’ Impacting 3 Million Americans

*Peter Christensen Health Center’s Dr. Brahm: ‘You may be going blind and not know it.’*

LAC DU FLAMBEAU—Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness worldwide, and you most likely won’t know you’re going blind until it’s too late—unless you get a regular check up with your eye doctor. Annual eye exams are the only way to see nerve damage that causes glaucoma.

“You may be going blind and not know it,” says Peter Christensen Health Center’s Optometrist Dr. Shane Brahm, who’s speaking out to help educate people during National Glaucoma Awareness Month. “Glaucoma is known as the ‘silent thief of sight’ because it lacks visible symptoms until a person loses significant amounts of their vision.”

Of the 3 million Americans who have glaucoma, about half of them lose as much as 40 percent of their vision before a person notices. There’s no cure for glaucoma, but there are actions people can take to slow the progression of vision loss. Dr. Brahm says education is crucial to preventing blindness from glaucoma.

“The best way to avoid irreversible damage from glaucoma is to have an annual eye exam and pay attention to your visual function,” Dr. Brahm says. “Glaucoma can affect people of all ages, including newborns. Glaucoma is not only for elderly.”

### Insights On Glaucoma

- Glaucoma is not always inherited from ancestors. Eye injuries, steroid use, diabetes and hypertension all can deteriorate the optic nerve, leading to vision loss from glaucoma.
- You can have perfect vision, pass your driver’s license eye exam, and still have glaucoma without knowing it. Glaucoma is known as the "silent thief of sight" because there are minimal symptoms until significant vision loss happens.
- Glaucoma can impact all ages from infants to elderly.
- Annual eye exams are crucial to early detection of nerve damage that causes glaucoma.
- If glaucoma is caught early, treatment is available to prevent loss of vision through eye drops and other methods depending on the individual person.

“Some say eyes are the windows to a person’s soul,” Dr. Brahm says. “I’d say the eyes can be the windows to a person’s overall health. Eye examinations often reveal other health issues.”

Learn about Dr. Brahm by [watching this short video](#).

*Peter Christensen Health Center, an AAAHC accredited healthcare provider, meets community members needs through coordinated, patient-centered, comprehensive health and wellness service that includes education, collaboration and patient sensitivity. Visit [PCHClinic.com](http://PCHClinic.com).*