About Healthy People 2010/2020
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has established a framework for prevention for the nation. It is a statement of national health objectives designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health and to establish national goals to reduce these threats. Developed through a broad consultation process with key stakeholders (including Prevent Blindness America), built on the best scientific knowledge available, and designed to measure programs over time, Healthy People 2020 is being designed to serve as a set of health objectives for the Nation to achieve together over the second decade of the century.

Substantively, the proposed Healthy People 2020 objectives have changed little from those of Healthy People 2010. Overall, Prevent Blindness America is very supportive of these objectives. In fact, our 2010-2013 Strategic Plan is being designed to fully embrace them.

Prevent Blindness America supports the first three objectives retained “as is” from Healthy People 2010:

HP 2020-1
Increase the proportion of preschool children aged 5 years and under who receive vision screening.

Support
- More than 12.1 million school-age children, or one in four, have some form of vision problem, yet only about 21 percent of preschool-age children have their vision screened, and only an estimated 14 percent of children receive comprehensive eye examinations before entering kindergarten or first grade.
- The Partnership for Prevention, in reviewing the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force’s listing of recommended clinical preventive services, has found that pediatric vision screening is inexpensive, treatment is effective and it improves the quality of life. The Task Force recommends screening to detect amblyopia, strabismus and defects in visual acuity in children younger than five years of age.
- According to the CDC, impaired vision can affect a child’s cognitive, emotional, neurologic and physical development by potentially limiting the range of experiences and kinds of information to which the child is exposed.
- Prevent Blindness America acknowledges that professional eye examinations are the “gold standard” of eye care and should always be encouraged, but also believes that vision screening is an appropriate and essential element of a strong public health approach to children’s vision care. The purpose of vision screening is to increase the number of children in need of care who ultimately receive comprehensive eye exams.

HP 2020-2
Reduce blindness and visual impairment in children and adolescents aged 17 years and under.

Support
- Myopia, or near-sightedness, occurs in one in four individuals in the United States. In children, myopia is found in 2 percent of those entering first grade and 15 percent of those entering high school.
- Prevent Blindness America is pleased to note the reduction in the overall cases of blindness and visual impairment in children and adolescents aged 17 years and under during the Healthy People 2010 years, and supports this objective remaining to further reduce this number.

HP 2020-3
Reduce occupational eye injuries

Support
- Eye injuries in the workplace are very common. More than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day.
- About 1 in 10 injuries require one or more missed workdays to recover from.
- Of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10-20 % will cause temporary or permanent vision loss.
- Experts believe that the correct eye protection could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of eye injuries in accidents.
The remaining objectives have been “retained but modified” from Healthy People 2010:

**HP 2020-4**

Increase the proportion of adults who have a comprehensive eye examination, including dilation, within the last 2 years and/or by age 45.

**Support**
- Many eye diseases and disorders have no symptoms or early warning signs. A dilated eye exam can detect changes in the retina or optic nerve or both.
- Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent vision loss in more than 90 percent of patients with diabetic retinopathy.

**HP 2020-5**

Reduce uncorrected visual impairment due to refractive errors.

**Support**
- One in two Americans has a refractive error or defect that can be corrected to provide sharper vision.
- 44 million Americans over the age of 40 have a refractive error (myopia or hyperopia).
- Further data is needed to determine racial, gender and disability disparities in refractive errors.

**HP 2020-6**

Reduce Visual Impairment.

**Support**
- 4.6 million Americans over the age of 40 are visually impaired or blind.
- 44 million Americans over the age of 40 have a refractive error (myopia or hyperopia).
- 2 million Americans over the age of 50 have age-related macular degeneration.
- 22 million Americans over the age of 40 have cataract.
- 4.5 million Americans over the age of 40 have diabetic retinopathy.
- 2.3 million Americans over the age of 40 have glaucoma.
- The annual cost of adult vision problems in the U.S. comes to approximately $51.4 billion.
- As the 9 million baby boomers with vision loss continue to age, the number of seniors with vision loss will continue to grow substantially.
- Of Americans who have vision loss and are 25 years of age and over, 4.5 million have less than a high school diploma, 6.0 million have a high school diploma or a GED, 5.4 million have some college education, and 3.6 million have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Approximately 5.7 million people with vision loss in the U.S. have a family income of less than $20,000.

**HP 2020-7**

Increase the use of personal protective eyewear in recreational activities and hazardous situations around the home.

**Support**
- Each year in the United States, there are approximately 600,000 documented sports-related eye injuries, over 42,000 of which require emergency room attention and an estimated 13,500 of which result in a permanent loss of sight.
- Approximately 72 percent of sports eye injuries occur in individuals younger than 25 years, and approximately 43 percent occur in individuals younger than 15 years.
- More than 90% of all eye injuries can be prevented with the use of appropriate protective eyewear.
- Accidents involving common household products cause 125,000 eye injuries each year.
- Ninety percent of these home eye injuries can be prevented through understanding, safety practices and the use of proper eye protection.
- Children suffer a disproportionate number of eye injuries, sustaining 27 to 52 percent of all ocular traumas.
HP 2020-8
Increase vision rehabilitation.

Support
- With the help of specially trained rehabilitation teachers, orientation and mobility specialists, low-vision specialists, and vision rehabilitation therapists, individuals can learn the essential skills for living with vision loss.
- Many low-vision optical and adaptive devices are available to help individuals make the best use of their remaining vision.