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## **The American Diabetes Association and Genentech Partner to Increase Equitable Access to Eye Health Care**

*Project Aims to Remove Barriers to Care to Help Prevent Vision Loss*

**ARLINGTON, Va. (March 20, 2023)** – Today, the American Diabetes Association® (ADA) and Genentech, a member of the Roche Group, announced a new partnership as part of the ADA’s [Health Equity Now](#) work to tackle access to screening and treatment for eye diseases that affect the diabetes community.

Diabetes is the leading cause of vision loss in people 18–64 years old, and African Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Hispanics/Latinos, and older adults living with diabetes are at higher risk of losing their vision or going blind.<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive eye exams play a crucial role in the prevention, early detection, and intervention of eye disease and vision loss caused by diabetes, yet many in these communities either don’t receive or don’t have appropriate access to eye health care.

“For people living with diabetes, a regular eye exam is a must to prevent or delay vision loss caused by diabetes,” said Charles “Chuck” Henderson, chief executive officer of the ADA. “Sadly, health inequities have led to many people not receiving the eye care and treatment they need. Through this community-based program made possible by Genentech, we will identify the barriers to eye health, address those barriers, and support community awareness through screenings and education.”

The programming will kick off with a pilot in Birmingham, Alabama in collaboration with community partners to conduct focus groups with African Americans to understand the barriers to eye health in under-resourced communities and provide resources, including education and screenings, to address these barriers. Learnings from this pilot will inform future collaborative work between the ADA and Genentech to improve health equity in eye care for people living with diabetes.

“Health disparities are a deep-rooted and systemic challenge,” said Alexander Hardy, chief executive officer of Genentech. “Genentech is proud to support the ADA’s Health Equity Now program as an important step forward in driving better eye care for all patients. This builds on our commitment to address inequities by advancing inclusive research in ophthalmology, expanding diversity in the field, and improving equitable access to care.”

This partnership brings together the ADA’s and Genentech’s shared dedication to health equity and long-standing commitment to people living with diabetes-related eye disease. A pioneer in the field, Genentech continues to research and develop treatments for conditions such as diabetic macular



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edema (DME) and diabetic retinopathy, which can cause visual impairment and blindness if left untreated. In 2022, Genentech [launched](#) ELEVATUM, a first of its kind study with one of its medicines in underrepresented patients with DME.

## About the American Diabetes Association

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation's leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic and help people living with diabetes thrive. For 82 years, the ADA has driven discovery and research to treat, manage, and prevent diabetes while working relentlessly for a cure. Through advocacy, program development, and education we aim to improve the quality of life for the over 133 million Americans living with diabetes or prediabetes. Diabetes has brought us together. What we do next will make us Connected for Life®. To learn more or to get involved, visit us at [diabetes.org](https://diabetes.org) or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Join the fight with us on Facebook ([American Diabetes Association](#)), Spanish Facebook ([Asociación Americana de la Diabetes](#)), LinkedIn ([American Diabetes Association](#)), Twitter ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)), and Instagram ([@AmDiabetesAssn](#)).

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1 <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/preventing-problems/diabetic-eye-disease>