

Press Kit Fact Sheet

Updated September 2021

About Lions Vision Services

Lions Vision Services (LVS) was created as a statewide 501(c)3 nonprofit organization by the Lions Clubs of South Carolina in 1969 and exists today to empower the under-served blind and visually impaired in South Carolina to live safe, meaningful, and fulfilling lives. LVS offers a range of programs and services to low-income South Carolina residents who apply for need-based financial assistance with obtaining affordable eye surgeries, low vision equipment, eyeglasses, eye exams, health screenings, and hearing aids. Each spring the organization hosts a Blind Fishing weekend event on the shores of Lake Marion in Santee, SC.

In addition to programs providing direct services to the blind and visually impaired, LVS facilitates and stewards the Palmetto Vision Alliance (PVA). Created on World Sight Day 2020 the PVA maximizes resources for blind and visually impaired persons in South Carolina through collaboration, cooperation, and coordination among key service stakeholders. More than 15 entities representing nonprofits, professional associations, and healthcare providers from across the state share a membership in this coalition and meet on a quarterly basis.

Headquartered in Columbia, SC in Lexington County, LVS offers services to South Carolina residents in all 46 counties throughout the state. Through living out the core values of empathy, community, growth, accountability, and curiosity, LVS seeks to advance its social, moral, intellectual, relational, and financial capital by being a trusted community ally and neighbor.

To learn more about LVS's services, visit www.lionsvisionservices.org or follow us on social media through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, or YouTube.

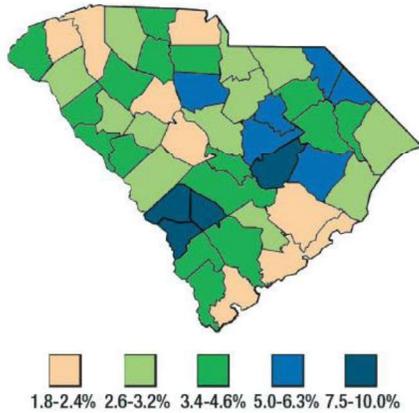
Our Vision

We envision a vibrant community in which preventable blindness is eliminated, the blind and visually impaired have the resources necessary to live fulfilling lives, and public perception recognizes the potential and dignity of every blind and visually impaired person. Achieving this vision requires an innovative and enduring spirit to meet the challenges we face.

Vision health is seldom defined as an “essential service,” yet our sight is absolutely essential to our quality of life, safety, economic security, and general health and well-being. Vision and eye health sits at a pivotal intersection of social determinants of health and serves as an insightful bellwether of other health conditions within a population. Addressing vision health first empowers individuals to more effectively take control of their overall health and wellbeing.

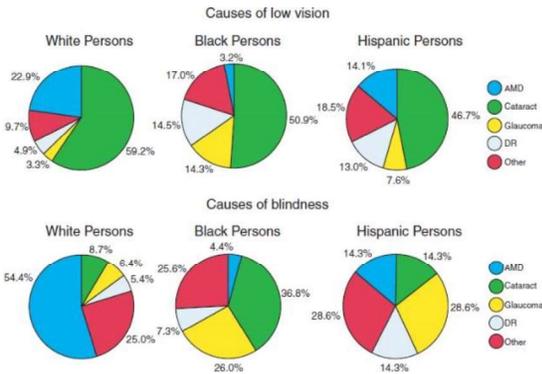
Without immediate and ongoing action to address our community's vision health needs, the coming decade will create an unprecedented strain on a fragile public health system through the developing spike in vision loss, which will impact the most vulnerable among us most severely.

Seeing the Big Picture



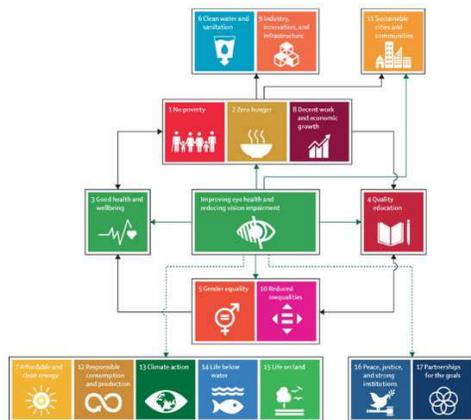
Vision Health in South Carolina

There are **more than 138,000**¹ South Carolinians with blindness or severe vision loss, a number that will *double*² by 2030 without effective intervention. People with severe vision impairment in South Carolina are more likely to have diabetes (9%), arthritis (18%), and mobility issues (26%)³. The economic burden of vision loss and eye disorders in South Carolina **exceeds \$2 billion**. The cost of this burden falls primarily (52%) on patients and their families in all age demographics under 65 years.⁴



Equity and Vision Health

Disparities in vision health are underscored by the causes of blindness, which vary significantly by ethnicity. In the U.S., African Americans are more likely to go blind due to cataracts, Hispanics are more likely to go blind due to Glaucoma, and Caucasians are more likely to go blind due to Age-Related Macular Degeneration.⁵



Vision and Sustainable Development

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/75/L. 108 commits the international community to eye care for 1.1 billion people who will be living with preventable sight loss by 2030.⁶ This resolution connects vision health to 10 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals that are vital to a healthy community.⁷

¹ Source: CDC reporting from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

² Source: Experts at the American Foundation for the Blind.

³ Source: CDC 2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

⁴ Source: NORC Study on the Cost of Vision Problems, 2013 study.

⁵ Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016 study.

⁶ Source: UNGA Resolution A/75/L. 108: www.undocs.org/en/A/75/L.108.

⁷ Source: The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, Eye Health and the SDGs.



What Others Are Saying

It is my privilege to strongly endorse Lions Vision Services, who received a grant from UnitedHealthcare in 2020 for their Eye Surgery and Low Vision Equipment programs. Through the grant, 29 individuals received an eye surgery at no cost and 3 individuals received critical low vision equipment.

UnitedHealthcare believes that Lions Vision Services' mission to give the more than 500,000 uninsured South Carolinians access to vision screenings, care and resources is in alignment with our company's Empowering Health commitment to ensure everyone has access to quality health.

Please consider supporting Lions Vision Services with funding to support their life-changing efforts to empower the underserved blind and visually-impaired in South Carolina to live safe, meaningful, and fulfilling lives.



Sara Ball
Senior Program Manager
UnitedHealthcare Social Responsibility

It is my privilege to strongly endorse the Lions Vision Services, a Lions Club International Licensee. The Lions have a long history of providing vision care in the community for both adults and child ren. The work the Lions Vision Services does is imperative to us here at Storm Eye Institute. We need soldiers out in our community working with us to preserve eye sight when possible and aid in vision loss when not.



Peter Mathias, MAOL
Director of Development
Storm Eye Institute, Medical University of SC

One of the most important reasons for partnering with Lions Vision Services is to be able to provide ongoing care for our patients with diabetic eye disease. With this partnership we are able to provide inpatient and outpatient surgery for patients who are uninsured and not eligible for Medicaid. We appreciate the fast, efficient and respectful manner in which our patients' needs are met. With this partnership we are able to maintain vision and return patients to work, to driving and to a better, more productive lifestyle.



Dr. Nick McLane
Ophthalmologist
Clemson Eye



What Others Are Saying

The Orcam Read is a wonderful device that helps people like myself that are vision impaired. It reads my mail for me and other important information. Now I don't need assistance from others, and I feel more independent.

James Nelson | Georgetown, SC
Low Vision Equipment Client

At 50 + years old I decided to go back to school to further my education in nursing. Over the years, I had made some mistakes, made some bad choices, but never did I lose my desire to excel. So here I am sitting in classrooms with fellow students young enough to be my children. I'm moving a bit slower, seeing a lot less, though looking quite a bit harder, but determined not to give up.

I needed cataract surgery. But with no insurance and no money to pay for the surgery, it didn't seem that was going to happen. I didn't lose Faith because I knew God has brought me through the storm time and time again. And once again he called in his angels. I had reached out to and was contacted by the Lions Vision Services. They paid for my cataract surgery on both eyes.



So yes, I'm still sitting in classrooms with fellow students young enough to be my children. My movements may still be a bit slower than theirs, but best believe, I can see them better. I want to say thank you to the Lions, God's angels. I'm ever so grateful for what you've done for me. Thank you for letting me "see" my way as I'm shooting for the moon. And if by chance, I should miss it head on, at least I know I will dwell among the Stars. I love you and thank you.

Linda Etheredge | Batesburg, SC
Eye Surgery Client

Brayan has made leaps and gains academically, especially in reading and writing now that he is better able to understand the words he hears and reads. At home, his mother continues to see him improve academically and have more interest in his work now that he understands. He feels less defeated, and mother sees less frustration when helping Brayan complete his homework.



The Raymundo family arrived to the U.S. in search of a better life after fleeing trauma and abuse and we are so happy to see them grow and thrive in our community. Your gift has created this growth in this family, and we will be forever grateful.

Brayan Corio Raymundo (Student) | Greenville, SC
Carolina Van De Voorde, LMSW, District Social Worker
Hearing Aid Client