A Letter to Our Readers Beyond the DMV

Sharing the Zion Baptist Church Health Ministry Eye Health Resource Collection with Communities Everywhere

This edition accompanies our Eye Health Guide. Although the directory highlights organizations in the DMV, we encourage you to identify similar resources in your own community and use this directory as a model.

On behalf of the Zion Baptist Church Health Ministry in Washington, DC, we are delighted to share these eye health and wellness resources with you.

What began as a simple two-page handout gradually evolved into a comprehensive resource. Along the way, we prayed, researched, reflected, and continually asked ourselves, 'What else might help someone on their eye health journey?'

As we reflected on this journey, we became increasingly aware that this project could never have been completed alone. God, in His wisdom and grace, has blessed us with remarkable technology and countless resources. Through researchers, healthcare professionals, educators, advocacy organizations, digital libraries, assistive technologies, search engines, and even artificial intelligence, information that once required months or years to locate is now available within moments.

We thank God for the gifted individuals whose knowledge, innovation, and dedication made these resources possible. We simply sought to prayerfully gather, organize, and present this information in a way that will educate, encourage, and bless others.

We do not claim ownership of the information contained within these documents. All wisdom belongs to God. Our prayer is that by bringing these materials together in one place, they will glorify God, promote healthy vision, and serve His people.

May God richly bless you as you protect and preserve the precious gift of sight.

In His Service,
Zion Baptist Church Health Ministry

Eye Health Resources for the DMV Area

Zion Baptist Church Health Ministry • Washington, DC • June 2026

The following resources for the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia are among those identified by the Zion Baptist Church Health Ministry. We are confident that there are additional resources available in our communities—please let this be an initial step in finding the care you need. We hope this helps with your search.

Note: Resources listed in this guide are current as of June 2026. Information about providers, programs, phone numbers, and eligibility requirements is subject to change. Please verify details directly with each organization before seeking services.

This resource list accompanies the Zion Baptist Church Health Ministry's Eye Health Guide, "The Gift of Sight." Taking care of your vision is an essential part of overall wellness. This guide covers common eye conditions and local resources to help you and your family maintain healthy eyesight—regardless of your insurance status.

Using This Guide Outside the DMV

This directory was built from resources in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia — our own community. National organizations, hotlines, and online retailers listed throughout this guide serve people everywhere and you can use them directly no matter where you live. Region-specific listings (local clinics, hospitals, and community health centers) are examples meant to show the kinds of resources to look for; please use them as a model and search for the equivalents where you live.

- **Start with a federally qualified health center (FQHC)** – Search "find a health center" at findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov to locate sliding-fee clinics near you, many of which offer vision services.
- **Check your state Medicaid program** – Vision benefits vary by state. Contact your state Medicaid or CHIP office, or visit your state's health insurance marketplace website, to learn what is covered for adults and children.
- **Look up your state's association or commission for the blind** – Most states have an agency similar to Virginia's DBVI or Maryland's Blind

Industries and Services, offering low vision services and rehabilitation. Search "[your state] commission for the blind and visually impaired."

- **Find your local Lions Club chapter** – Lions Clubs International (lionsclubs.org) has local chapters nationwide that often sponsor free eye exams and eyeglasses.
- **Ask about school-based vision programs** – Vision To Learn (visiontolearn.org) and similar programs operate in many states; check their website or ask your child's school nurse about vision screening programs.
- **Search your county or city health department** – Many local health departments maintain their own lists of low-cost eye care providers and community clinics.

Common Eye Conditions

Refractive Errors

The most frequent eye problems in the United States, these include:

- **Myopia (nearsightedness)** – difficulty seeing distant objects clearly
- **Hyperopia (farsightedness)** – difficulty focusing on nearby objects
- **Astigmatism** – distorted vision at all distances
- **Presbyopia** – age-related loss of near focus, typically beginning between ages 40–50

Refractive errors can usually be corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses, or surgery.

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

AMD damages central vision, which is essential for reading, driving, and recognizing faces. It affects the macula—the part of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed sight. There are two forms:

- **Dry AMD** – the more common form, involving gradual thinning of the macula
- **Wet AMD** – caused by abnormal blood vessel growth that leaks fluid beneath the retina

Diabetic Retinopathy

This condition is the leading cause of blindness among working-age American adults. High blood sugar damages blood vessels in the retina, and the disease often progresses without early symptoms. Regular dilated eye exams are critical for anyone with diabetes.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma refers to a group of diseases that damage the optic nerve, often due to elevated eye pressure. It can lead to irreversible vision loss if untreated, but early detection through routine exams allows for effective management.

Cataracts

A cataract is a clouding of the eye's natural lens, causing blurry vision, faded colors, and difficulty seeing at night. Cataracts are common with aging and can be treated with surgery when they interfere with daily activities.

Dry Eye Disease

Dry eye occurs when tears are insufficient or evaporate too quickly, leading to irritation, redness, and discomfort. Causes range from environmental factors to underlying health conditions like Sjögren's syndrome. Treatments include artificial tears, prescription drops, and in-office procedures.

Amblyopia and Strabismus

- **Amblyopia ("lazy eye")** – reduced vision in one eye due to abnormal visual development in childhood
- **Strabismus ("crossed eyes")** – misalignment of the eyes, which can contribute to amblyopia if untreated

Early detection through pediatric eye exams is key to successful treatment.

Eye Care by Insurance Type

Private Health Insurance

Most employer-sponsored and marketplace health plans cover medical eye care (treatment for diseases and conditions) as part of general health benefits. However, **routine vision exams and eyeglasses** often require a separate vision plan.

What to do:

- Check whether your plan includes vision benefits or if you need a standalone vision policy
- Many providers accept a wide range of insurance—call ahead to verify
- Retailers like Costco Optical, Warby Parker, and online vendors offer affordable glasses even without vision coverage

Local providers accepting most major insurance:

Washington, D.C. — Eye Care Practices (DMV Example)

- **Washington Eye Doctors** – Locations in Downtown D.C. and Chevy Chase, MD. Comprehensive exams, pediatric care, myopia management, and dry eye treatment. washingtoneyedoctors.com
- **Washington Eye Specialists** – Board-certified ophthalmologists serving Northeast D.C. (Michigan Park area) for over 25 years; specialties include cataract, glaucoma, and retina care. washingtoneyespecialists.org
- **Visionary Eye Doctors** – 4301 Connecticut Ave., NW. Comprehensive optometry and specialty eye care; accepts DC Medicaid; multilingual staff. voeyedr.com | Phone: (301) 591-1763
- **Metropolitan Optical** – Full-scope optometry practice on Pennsylvania Ave., NW. Eye exams, contact lens fittings, and an optical boutique. metropolitanoptical-pennave.com
- **MedStar Washington Hospital Center – Eye Center** – Hospital-based ophthalmology accepting Medicare and DC Medicaid; limited exams available for uninsured patients. Phone: (202) 877-3937. medstarhealth.org
- **Howard University Hospital – Department of Ophthalmology** – Accepts Medicaid; limited exams available annually for uninsured patients. Phone: (202) 865-1257.

Washington, D.C. — Community Health & Low-Cost Resources (DMV Example)

- **Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington** – Free glaucoma screenings, low-cost eyeglasses (starting at $40; free for DC/MD/VA Medicaid holders), and vision education programs. 415 2nd St. NE, Washington, DC. youreyes.org
- **Unity Health Care** – Multiple DC locations; sliding-fee scale based on income; vision services available. unityhealthcare.org
- **Mary's Center** – Locations in D.C. and Maryland; sliding-fee scale; eye exams and referrals. maryscenter.org

Virginia — Eye Care Practices (DMV Example)

- **Northern Virginia Ophthalmology Associates** – Offices in Falls Church, Fairfax, and Alexandria. Cataract surgery, LASIK/PRK, dry eye treatment, and comprehensive exams. Phone: (703) 534-3900. nvoaeyes.com
- **Eye Specialists & Surgeons of Northern Virginia** – Fairfax office serving Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties. Cataract surgery, oculoplastics, and comprehensive ophthalmology. Phone: (571) 349-2191. eyespecialistsnova.com

Virginia — Community Health & Low-Cost Resources (DMV Example)

- **Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services** – Sliding-fee scale; vision screenings and referrals. Phone: (703) 535-5568.
- **Inova Lions Eye Clinic (INOVA Fairfax Hospital)** – Free eye care for uninsured adults meeting income requirements; referral from a community health center required. Phone: (703) 876-2700.
- **Northern Virginia Lions Mobile Sight and Hearing Screening Unit** – Free sight and hearing screenings at locations throughout Northern Virginia; schedule posted on the Northern Virginia Lions website. Phone: (703) 475-1692.

Maryland — Eye Care Practices (DMV Example)

- **Washington Eye Doctors – Chevy Chase** – Full-service eye care including a dedicated myopia management center for children. washingtoneyedoctors.com
- **Maryland Eye Care Center** – Locations in Silver Spring, Hyattsville, and Takoma Park. Comprehensive eye exams, cataract, glaucoma, and dry eye treatment. Phone: (301) 431-0431. mdeyecarecenter.com

Maryland — Community Health & Low-Cost Resources (DMV Example)

- **Mission of Mercy Mobile Clinics** – Free medical care including vision screenings at Maryland locations. amissionofmercy.org
- **Shepherd's Table Eye Clinic** – Vision care for low-income adults without vision insurance; referral required from a government agency or nonprofit organization. Phone: (301) 585-6463 ext. 203.
- **Montgomery County Care for Kids Program** – Free eye exams for uninsured children who live in Montgomery County, MD. Phone: (240) 777-1300.

- **Prince George's County Kaiser Care for Kids Program** – Free eye exams for uninsured children who live in Prince George's County, MD. Phone: (301) 324-2925.

Medicare

Medicare Part B covers:

- Annual eye exams for diabetic retinopathy (for beneficiaries with diabetes)
- Glaucoma screening once every 12 months for high-risk individuals
- Cataract surgery and one pair of corrective lenses or contacts after surgery
- Treatment for eye diseases and injuries

Medicare does not cover:

- Routine eye exams for glasses or contacts
- Eyeglasses or contact lenses (except post-cataract surgery)

Medicare Advantage (Part C) plans often include additional vision benefits such as routine exams and eyewear allowances—check your specific plan.

Local options:

- Most ophthalmologists and optometrists in the DMV accept Medicare
- **Lions Club Low Vision Centers** at Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute provide services for those with significant vision loss

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Medicaid

Medicaid coverage for vision services varies by state. The table below shows DC, Maryland, and Virginia as an example of how this can play out — contact your own state's Medicaid office to learn what is covered where you live:

State	Adult Vision Coverage
Washington, D.C.	Comprehensive exams, eyeglasses, and medical eye care covered
Maryland	Limited to medical eye care; routine exams/glasses generally not covered for adults
Virginia	Limited adult coverage; medical eye care covered

Finding Medicaid providers:

- **D.C.**: Unity Health Care community health centers accept D.C. Medicaid and offer vision services
- **Maryland**: Community health centers and federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) often provide sliding-scale vision care
- **Virginia**: Contact your managed care organization for a list of participating eye care providers

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Uninsured / No Insurance

Several programs and clinics offer free or reduced-cost eye care in the DMV area:

Free and Low-Cost Clinics

Resource	Location	Services
Unity Health Care	Multiple D.C. locations	Sliding-fee scale based on
Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services	Alexandria, VA	Sliding-fee scale; vision s
Mary's Center	D.C. & Maryland	Sliding-fee scale; eye exa
Mission of Mercy Mobile Clinics	Maryland locations	Free medical care includi

Assistance Programs

- **Eyecare America** – Free eye exams and up to one year of care for qualifying seniors (65+) and those at risk for eye disease. No insurance required. aao.org/eyecare-America
- **VISION USA** – Provides free eye exams to uninsured, low-income workers and their families. The program typically opens for applications in January. aoa.org/visions
- **Lions Club International** – Local Lions Clubs often sponsor free eye exams and eyeglasses for those in need. Contact your local chapter:
    - Lions of D.C.: lionsclubs.org
    - Maryland Lions: mdlions.org
    - Virginia Lions: valions.org
- **Infant SEE** – Free comprehensive eye assessment for infants 6–12 months, regardless of income or insurance. infantsee.org
- **Vision To Learn** – Free school-based vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses for children, regardless of insurance status. Active in DC Public Schools and serving communities in Maryland and Virginia. visiontolearn.org
- **Prevent Blindness** – Offers vision screening programs and can connect you with local resources. preventblindness.org

Affordable Eyeglasses

- **Zenni Optical, Eye Buy Direct, Warby Parker** – Online retailers with frames starting under $20
- **Costco Optical** – No membership required for optical services in some states; competitive pricing
- **Walmart Vision Center** – Accepts walk-ins; budget-friendly exams and glasses
- **New Eyes** – Provides free glasses to those in financial need. new-eyes.org

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Vision Requirements for Driver's Licenses (DMV Example — Check Your Own State's DMV)

Jurisdiction	Key Requirements
Washington, D.C.	Medical/Eye Report form required if a condition may impair driving
Maryland	20/40 acuity in each eye and 140° field of vision for an unrestricted license
Virginia	Vision screening required at DMV or through a licensed provider

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Tips for Maintaining Eye Health

1. **Schedule regular eye exams** – Adults should have a comprehensive exam every 1–2 years; more often if you have diabetes or a family history of eye disease
2. **Know your family history** – Many eye conditions, including glaucoma and AMD, have genetic components
3. **Manage chronic conditions** – Controlling blood sugar and blood pressure protects your vision
4. **Protect your eyes** – Wear sunglasses with UV protection outdoors and safety eyewear during hazardous activities
5. **Give your eyes a break** – Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds

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Helpful Online Resources

- **National Eye Institute** – nei.nih.gov
- **CDC Vision Health Initiative** – cdc.gov/vision-health

- **EyeSmart (American Academy of Ophthalmology)** – aao.org/eye-health
- **Prevent Blindness** – preventblindness.org
- Additional Online Resources:

- **American Council of the Blind** – acb.org
- **Blind Industries and Services of Maryland** – bism.org
- **International Braille and Technology Center** – Part of the National Federation of the Blind. nfb.org
- **MLK Jr. Library Center for Accessibility** – dclibrary.org
- **Metropolitan Washington Ear** – Free listener services and instruction for qualified individuals. washear.org
- **Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)** – Virginia's state agency offering low vision services, orientation and mobility training, and rehabilitation for Virginians who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind. dbvi.virginia.gov

For questions about your specific eye health needs, we encourage you to contact your local eye care provider or insurance company directly. Your vision is a gift worth protecting.