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The Foundation for Eye Health Awareness

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***Think About Your Eyes* Public Awareness Campaign Drives Six Percent Improvement In Comprehensive Eye Exams**

Award-Winning Campaign Furthers Awareness Mission

Alexandria, VA (June 17, 2011) – The *Think About Your Eyes* campaign achieved its goal of increasing the number of comprehensive yearly eye exams and vision health awareness. Since its launch in 2010, reaching more than 22% of the U.S. population, the campaign has driven approximately 1.6 million comprehensive eye exams (more than 6 percent improvement), a 36 percent improvement in the number of new patients scheduling comprehensive eye exams, and as a result of the overall rise in comprehensive eye exams, eyecare professionals have detected more than 300,000 incremental cases of potentially blinding eye diseases.

“As an ophthalmologist, I’m thrilled to see that more and more people have become conscious of and proactive about vision health,” said Paul Michelson, MD, Board of Directors, Foundation for Eye Health Awareness. “We hope to continue to educate the public about the preventative benefits of comprehensive eye exams, as often times waiting for symptoms to occur can result in irreversible vision loss due to eye disease.”

The success is due in part to the program’s multi-faceted public awareness campaign which includes television, radio, online and social media communications that focus on a variety of eye health and wellness issues aided by the eye exam— from eye disease and children’s vision and visual fatigue and overall health. Ads encourage consumers to visit ThinkAboutYourEyes.com to locate an eyecare professional through an available tool on the website and ultimately to schedule an appointment. Consumers can also connect with the *Think About Your Eyes* campaign through its social media channels on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr – all of which are accessible from the campaign website.

Mission Established

Last October, the non-profit organization Foundation for Eye Health Awareness, which promotes awareness about the importance of eye health, became the messenger of the *Think About Your Eyes* campaign. This agreement allowed the *Think About Your Eyes* campaign to continue its efforts on a larger scale and enabled the initiative to continue to grow.

“The mission of the *Think About Your Eyes* campaign is directly in line with the messages of the Foundation for Eye Health Awareness,” said Mike Daley, president and executive director, The Foundation for Eye Health Awareness. “We are honored to work together on this important effort to inform the public about the importance of good vision health.”

Unique from other vision health campaigns, the *Think About Your Eyes* initiative followed a social health change behavior model using extensive message-testing research among prospect-patients prior to launching the campaign in order to best encourage the general public to take action, making vision health a priority. A third party research team quantitatively tested concepts and vetted each stage of development with a panel of eyecare and non-profit professionals.

Award Winning Campaign

The efforts of the *Think About Your Eyes* campaign have been recognized with several distinct honors including two Platinum MarCom Awards in the External Communication Program and Special Event category, a Bronze Bulldog Award for Excellence in Media and Public Relations in the Best Health, Medicine and Fitness campaign category, as well as a Pharma Choice Award with *Pharmaceutical Executive*.

“We are honored to be a part of such a successful initiative that has changed perceptions and attitudes about vision health,” said Carl Bracy, senior vice president of marketing and new business, Essilor of America. “Similar to other successful health initiatives, such as those surrounding breast cancer awareness, the *Think About Your Eyes* campaign aims to make the importance of vision health and comprehensive eye exams not only common knowledge throughout the general public, but calls for a change in behavior where vision health is concerned.”

History

Vision problems and eye disease can occur at any time, regardless of age, yet a 2006 Vision Watch study reported that over half of the U.S. population skipped yearly comprehensive eye exams. This trend led to the development of the *Think About Your Eyes* campaign to improve the public’s quality of life through good vision care. The campaign, founded by Essilor, piloted in a single test market in Tarrant County, Texas in 2007. The success of the pilot program inspired the formation of the *Think About Your Eyes* Coalition, created through the joining of Luxottica Group, VSP Global and eventually Transitions Optical with Essilor. The campaign expanded to nine key markets spanning from New York to Los Angeles.

In the first year, the program led thought leadership in creating news around the common of vision screenings, supported by the American Optometric Association. Mayors of New York City and Chicago supported the program by declaring “Think About Your Eyes Week” in both cities, aimed to raise awareness of the importance of vision health. Street teams, including giant costumed eyeballs, appeared at popular tourist destinations in both New York City and Chicago during the week, reaffirming vision health messaging

Interested partners should contact Mike Daley, president and executive director, The Foundation for Eye Health Awareness, to learn more. Daley can be reached via email, mdaley@ehafoundation.org or phone, 703-548-2896.

About the Foundation for Eye Health Awareness and *Think About Your Eyes*

Think About Your Eyes is a public awareness initiative focused on educating consumers about the importance of vision health and comprehensive eye exams. This nationwide messaging campaign, sponsored by the Foundation for Eye Health Awareness with generous donations from Essilor, Luxottica, VSP Global and Transitions Optical, encourages people to take better care of their eyes.

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