Good afternoon, NEHEP Partners! Welcome to our first Partnership Webinar: When Partners Engage, Great Things Happen. This event is the result of the feedback you gave us during the NEHEP Partnership survey last year and the recommendations you made to help us connect with the NEHEP Partnership in a more personal way. Again, this is Neyal Ammary-Risch, director of NEHEP, and with me is Dr. Anne Coleman, Chair of the NEHEP Planning Committee. We’re both so happy you could join us today. I want to say thank you for all your great work this past year and also welcome so many of the partnership members who could join us today. Thank you, partners. Before we begin, I’d like to give you an overview of today’s agenda. Dr. Coleman will begin by presenting a brief overview of the history of NEHEP, its mission, structure, and each of its program areas, target audiences, and key messages. Then she’ll provide an overview of the NEHEP Partnership, its composition, roles, and the benefits of being a Partner, and we’ll share some recent accomplishments and collaborations. She will also give you an update on where we are with our Five-Year Agenda and thorough the Webinar you will learn about opportunities for serving those at highest risk for vision loss. I will share the results of the Partnership survey that was conducted last year and some topline results of recent in-depth interviews in which some of you might have participated. I’ll also provide you with an overview of some of our educational resources and we’ll also be doing a quick survey at the end of the Webinar to find out the types of resources that you currently use or need for educating others about eye health. We’ll end with some time to answer questions you might have today, but now I’d like to turn things over to Dr. Coleman.

Thank you. In 1988, Congress provided the National Eye Institute with new funds for public education on eye health and blindness prevention. As a result, NEHEP was established with the goal of increasing awareness among healthcare professionals and the public of scientifically based health information that can be applied to preserving sight and preventing blindness. Numerous organizations from both the public and private sectors were asked to join in partnership with NEHEP working together towards this common goal. The initial emphasis of the program was to educate the public about the importance of early detection and treatment of glaucoma and diabetic eye disease, because at the time scientific evidence revealed that blindness caused by these diseases could, in many cases, be prevented. Over the years, the program has grown and three new program areas have been added. The goal of NEHEP is to ensure that vision is a public health priority through the translation of eye and vision research into public and professional education programs. All NEHEP programs and activities are designed to reflect this goal. NEHEP supports collaboration among all eye health professionals, health care providers, patients, and the public to accomplish this goal. There is a two-tiered advisory structure consisting of the NEHEP Planning Committee and the NEHEP Partnership that feeds back advice to the National Eye Institute. The Planning Committee advises the NEI on the overall development, implementation, and evaluation of NEHEP programs. It operates as a panel of the NEl National Advisory Eye Council’s Program Planning Subcommittee. The Planning Committee is currently comprised of ophthalmologists, optometrists, and public health educators who are experts in NEHEP program areas or target populations.

The NEHEP Partnership was established to allow ongoing, interactive, mutually beneficial relationships with NEI and other organizations to achieve NEHEP goals and objectives. Initially, charter membership invitations were extended to those organizations represented at an initial 1989 NEHEP Planning Conference and as the program developed and evolved, additional organizations were invited to join NEHEP. Today, there are 64 Partner organizations that have an interest in eye health education or that represent populations at higher risk for eye diseases.

All programs and activities are outlined in the NEHEP Five-Year Agenda. This document, developed with guidance from the NEHEP Planning Committee and the Partnership, provides a framework for developing and implementing activities for people at higher risk of eye disease. It is built upon best practices, current research, and scientific literature. Last year, we concluded work for the 2006–2011 agenda, which was organized around five priority areas, 11 goals, and 28 objectives. I’m happy to inform you that during the course of the NEHEP Five-Year Agenda implementation, we completed 25 of 26 objectives and significant progress was made on the last of the 26 objectives. I want to personally thank all of you for your involvement, input, and ideas in the first Five-Year Agenda. We are currently in the process of writing the new Five-Year Agenda, which will begin in 2013. Similar to the previous agenda, it will outline all of NEHEPs goals and objectives for each of our program areas over the next few years. We will share the agenda with you and hope that it will serve as a guide for your own programs in years to come. I’d like to spend a little time now reviewing the five NEHEP program areas.

The Diabetic Eye Disease Program increases awareness about diabetic eye disease among people with diabetes and health professionals who work with them. Outreach efforts particularly target those at higher risk of diabetic eye disease, including older adults, African Americans, Hispanics and Latinos, as well as American Indians and Alaska Natives. Program messages emphasize that people with diabetes need a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year and that early detection, timely treatment, and appropriate follow-up may prevent vision loss or blindness from diabetic eye disease. This past year, a lot was done to communicate diabetic eye disease messages to high-risk audiences, particularly during American Diabetes Month, where we were able to share NEHEP information on the news, on TV, radio, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and newspapers. Our Glaucoma Education Program is focused on primary open-angle glaucoma and focuses on target audiences at higher risk, including African Americans over age 40; everyone over age 60, especially Mexican Americans; and people with a family history of glaucoma. Program messages are that glaucoma has no warning signs and if left untreated, can lead to permanent vision loss or blindness; and that people at higher risk should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam every one to two years. Although we work to promote glaucoma awareness throughout the year, we do a lot to reach our high-risk audiences in January during Glaucoma Awareness Month. We have especially had a lot of media coverage in the African American media. Here you can see an example of transit ads that are currently in Chicago and New York City. The Low Vision program is the third NEHEP program and this program aims to create awareness among adults, their family and friends, and the general public about low vision and vision rehabilitation services. This program stresses the message that “If you have low vision, you can make the most of your remaining sight” and that “Vision rehabilitation can help you maintain your independence and quality of life.” We’re also encouraging and expanding this program to reach eye care professionals to encourage them to make referrals for vision rehabilitation services as part of the continuum of care for people with low vision. Last year, in response to the growing need to educate older adults about vision health, NEHEP launched its newest program on vision and aging. This program targets adults age 50 and older and helps health professionals who work with them in the community setting to provide information about age-related eye diseases and conditions, the importance of comprehensive dilated eye exams, and ways to protect their vision as they age. Program messages stress that “Some vision changes are normal as we age, but blindness is not,” that “age-related eye diseases often have no early warning signs,” that “early detection and treatment may prevent vision loss or blindness,” and that “everyone age 50 and older should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam.” Finally, we have a program that targets Hispanic/Latino individuals, as well as their family, friends, and caregivers, in addition to community health workers and health professionals working with this population. This program focuses on the fact that Hispanics and Latinos are at higher risk for some eye diseases, many of which have no early warning signs or symptoms, and that early detection, treatment, and appropriate follow-up may prevent vision loss or blindness. This program works in collaboration with the other NEHEP program areas to ensure materials and messages are culturally and linguistically appropriate for Hispanic/Latino audiences. For the past two years, NEHEP has been offering train-the-trainer and training sessions to community health workers, diabetes educators, and health educators about the *Diabetes and Healthy Eyes Toolkit*, which is available in English and Spanish, which you are going to hear more about that shortly. I’m now going to turn things over to Neyal, who is going to talk with you more about the NEHEP Partnership and collaborations. Neyal?

Thank you, Dr. Coleman. As Dr. Coleman said, NEHEP has a formal partnership with 64 organizations. The purpose of the Partnership is to establish ongoing, interactive relationships between the National Eye Institute and organizations concerned with eye health. Partnership includes a variety of non-profit, civic, professional, academic, and government institutions. Membership criteria for the Partnership include having an interest in eye health or representing a NEHEP target audience and operating on the national level with a local structure. A full Partnership directory is available on the NEHEP Website. The Partnership facilitates the implementation of NEHEP Programs and supports NEHEP by participating in the development and implementation of NEHEP activities; facilitating coordination of activities and promoting collaboration among NEHEP Partnership members; endorsing strategies and activities to further the aims of NEHEP; exchanging information, views, and materials on eye health education; and in assisting NEHEP in its efforts to reach populations at highest risk for eye disease. For example, as you can see in these pictures, Partnership organizations like the Macular Degeneration Partnership helps disseminate NEHEP materials when they exhibit at conferences around the country, and in the lower picture the National Medical Association is using NEHEP materials to conduct diabetic eye disease education at local beauty shops around Texas. Participation in the NEHEP Partnership affords organizations the following benefits: active involvement in the development and implementation of evidence-based eye health education activities; the opportunity to exchange information, interact, and collaborate with other organizations interested in eye health; and access to free education materials and resources to augment and complement your organization’s own eye health information and education activities. NEHEP Partnership organizations do not have to pay for any materials that they order from the NEI.

As a Partnership network, we’re always looking for ways to share information with each other and to work with organizations to reach high-risk populations. In recent years, we’ve expanded the Partnership by inviting several new organizations to join our efforts. These include the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, National Rural Health Association, VisionServe Alliance, the American Society of Ophthalmic Registered Nurses, and the National Association of Community Health Centers, and we’re very excited to have these organizations now be part of the Partnership. In 2008, when we launched the electronic newsletter, *Outlook,* we began soliciting article submissions from the Partnership. *Outlook* has now become a really popular mechanism for the Partnership to share information about their eye health education activities, events, and resources. Each issue is distributed to more than 3,000 people and the mailing lists continue to grow. So I really encourage you to continue submitting articles and share your activities with us. Last year, NEHEP established its Twitter and Facebook pages. We have been following and liking all of our Partnership organizations and hope that you have been following us and liking our pages as well. We’ve also been tagging Partners in posts to help bring greater visibility to your organizations. So I want to thank those of you who have been helping sharing and re-tweeting NEHEP messages as well.

NEHEP also collaborates with Partnership organizations on a variety of initiatives. For example, when we launched our Vision and Aging program, we worked with the National Council on Aging to recruit more than 200 organizations nationwide to pilot test the *See Well for a Lifetime Toolkit* that Anne mentioned earlier*.* We worked with the American Foundation for the Blind to adapt a “Simple Solutions for Managing Medications” handout for people living with low vision, and with the Lions clubs to co-brand the Vision and Aging Toolkit and adapt it for use by Lions members. We’ve also worked with the National Diabetes Education Program to share eye health information, announcements, and resources with their Partnership and to incorporate eye health information in their activities. In the past, NDEP also has invited NEHEP to work with them on some DED PSAs on XM radio stations. And we also regularly participate in their Pharmacy, Podiatry, Optometry, and Dentistry Workgroup and continue to with their Hispanic/Latino Workgroup to provide information to its members about the *Ojo con su vision!* Program. The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors invited NEHEP to sit on their Vision and Eye Health Working Group steering committee to provide input and guidance on increasing the capacity of state health departments to address eye health. NEHEP has been on the steering committee since 2008, and we’ve worked with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors to provide eye health education materials to all chronic disease directors in all 50 states. Last year, NEHEP hosted a survey and coordinated a series of focus groups involving Lions Clubs’ International Foundation (LCIF) members; we helped analyze data and worked with LCIF to assess the types of resources they would need to use for Lions members out in the community and how best to repackage and disseminate the information. NEHEP also worked with the American Academy of Physicians Assistants to develop and distribute a brochure specifically aimed at physicians assistants to help them learn about common eye diseases, symptoms, and treatment options and to be able to identify patients at higher risk. This was distributed widely at their annual meeting and also posted on their website as a PDF. And recently, we have been working with the American Diabetes Association to distribute diabetic eye disease and Medicare benefit materials to people seeking information. They also helped support us during Healthy Vision Month by adding diabetic eye disease content to their blog. So these are just a few examples of simple collaborations that can make a big difference. We’ve been working hard to connect with each of you to identify opportunities to collaborate, support each other, and work toward a common goal of preventing blindness. So I really encourage you to start thinking about ways we can work together and reach out and contact us and let us know about any ideas you have.

I want to move on to talk about some topline results from the survey we conducted with you last summer. This survey was designed to gather your opinions and experiences regarding your involvement with NEHEP, available resources, communication, and opportunity for collaboration. The vast majority of the Partnership felt that they benefit from their involvement in the Partnership, and many believe their relationship with NEHEP can be improved through periodic Web-based meetings and information shared through the NEHEP Website. While many NEHEP Partnership organizations understand the importance of communication and suggested a number of ways NEHEP can promote their programs and resources, only half of all respondents indicated that they provide links to the NEHEP Website or resources on their own organization’s website. When asked about the NEHEP Website, more than eight out of 10 respondents indicated that they visit the NEHEP Website monthly, and when they do they overwhelmingly seek educational materials and resources to use in their programs. When asked about NEHEP areas that are supported by the Partnership organizations, more than half of all respondents indicated that the Diabetic Eye Disease and Glaucoma programs are supported by their organizations, with low vision and vision and aging not far behind. With regard to our target audiences, half of all the Partnership organizations said they have activities, programs, services, or projects focused on older adults, Hispanics/Latinos, healthcare professionals, and adults with low vision. Just less than half of respondents target African Americans and children. When it comes to working collaboratively with NEHEP, 91 percent of you said you are willing to partner with us on health education and promotional activities and to help NEHEP programs and resources, 68 percent would be willing to help pretest materials, co-author articles and papers with us, and 65 percent are willing to co-present with NEHEP at national conferences on health education activities, and 62 percent are interested in co-sponsoring Webinars with us. In addition to this survey, we just finished a series of in-depth interviews with partners at random, which some of you may have participated in, to discuss some of these findings in more detail. We are currently exploring a variety of activities based on these survey results and to find ways to increase your involvement in NEHEP Partnerships, so stay tuned for some new exciting things coming down the road!

So what’s new?! Based on findings from the survey and in-depth interviews, we’ve been busy creating the things you said you wanted. In addition to Webinars like this, we created a new Web button for partners to use on their websites to showcase their involvement with the Partnership. This is something that more than 90 percent of you said that you wanted, so we hope that every organization posts it on their websites. Earlier this month, I sent the button and its instructions on how to post it and immediately we got news from the Glaucoma Research Foundation, the Macular Degeneration Partnership, and EyeCare America that they posted the button on their homepage and on various sections of their websites, so I want to thank them for doing that and encourage all of you to post it on your webpages. If you can’t find the e-mail that I sent earlier this month please just contact me; I’ll be happy to send it to you again.

We’re also working on a new area of the NEHEP Website called Collaboration Corner. Here we are going to be featuring Partnership organizations and the work that you are doing, from community events to workshops and other initiatives using NEHEP resources. If you’re interested in being featured, we’ll have a form on the website that you can fill out and send to us and then we’ll be happy to highlight your organization, so please stay tuned for that. Also later this year we’ll be launching a Partner-only section on the NEHEP Website, where you’ll be able to access various documents and information about the Partnership, ideas for using NEHEP resources in your community, and much more.

Since you know what’s coming soon, let’s take a moment to talk about what is available to you now. On the NEHEP Website, you’ll find a wide variety of resources to help you enhance your own educational outreach. You’ll find culturally and linguistically appropriate educational resources and materials that you can customize and use in your own community; you’ll also find public service announcements, eye health education research findings that can help you plan your educational activities, suggested strategies for outreach, and much more. You’ll also find all of our educational toolkits for our different program areas, which I’ll go over shortly now. Here you’ll see the *Diabetes and Healthy Eyes Toolkit,* which is designed to provide community health workers with science-based, user-friendly materials that can be used to teach people about diabetic eye disease. Community health workers are very popular in helping us reach some of our target audiences, especially Hispanics/Latinos and African Americans. Over the past year we have trained more than 120 community health workers on how to use the toolkit and we’ll be attending the meeting with the National Rural Health Association next week to train another 50 community health workers. We’re also in the process of developing an online tutorial to train community health workers to use the toolkit and that will be available on the NEHEP Website soon. In addition to the *Diabetes and Healthy Eyes Toolkit* being popular with Hispanic/Latino communities, these two booklets, *Watch Out for Your Vision!* and *Visión Saludable,* are two culturally tailored resources for the Hispanic/Latino community. One uses a *fotonovela* story format to talk about diabetic eye disease, and the other covers an array of topics such as eye exams, common eye diseases and conditions, and more. These are just two examples of materials you can order from bulk from us for free and distribute throughout your community.

As part of glaucoma awareness efforts we will launch a new online glaucoma toolkit called *Keep Vision in Your Future*. This toolkit provides health professionals, health educators, and other community professionals with everything they need to give a presentation on glaucoma. It includes a PowerPoint speaker’s guide, handouts, simulations, educational materials, and more, such as drop-in articles, church bulletin copies, public service announcements, and other things that you can educate others about glaucoma. All of these items are available for downloading on the NEHEP Website. As part of our Vision in Aging program we launched See Well for a Lifetime, an educational series on vision and aging This toolkit is for anyone working with older adults in community-based settings such as health centers, assisted living facilities, senior centers, YMCAs, and more. It allows them to share information about common age-related eye diseases and conditions and how older adults can protect their vision as they age. This series is comprised by three educational modules that can be used individually or build on each other as a series. This first module covers basic information about eye health as you age—which changes in vision are normal and which are not and how to protect your vision. The second module contains more detailed information about age-related eye diseases and conditions, including age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, glaucoma, dry eye, and diabetic eye disease. The third module is focused on low vision, how to seek rehabilitation services, and questions that you can ask your specialist in low vision. Each of these modules includes a PowerPoint, speaker’s guide, handouts, promotional announcements, evaluation forms, and more. And we’re currently working with one of our partners, the National Association of Hispanic Elderly, to test it with bilingual Hispanics and Latinos and how best to adapt this information for older adults.

As we work to promote information about age-related eye diseases and conditions and the importance of early detection of eye disease through comprehensive dilated eye exams, we make sure to provide information about the Medicare benefit available for people at higher risk of glaucoma and those with diabetes. There you’ll see images of Medicare benefit cards that is a very popular item for organizations to distribute at health fairs, community settings, and other health care centers. We know that financial assistance can be a barrier to eye care for some people, so promoting this benefit and sharing information about organizations that can help provide financial assistance for eye care is very important to NEHEP and something we include in all of our outreach efforts.

At the end of the summer we’ll be releasing a brand-new resource as part of our Low Vision program. We are updating our *What You Should Know About Low Vision* booklet and have also developed new DVDs promoting vision rehabilitation services as part of the continuous care for people with low vision. Each booklet will have a DVD developed for people with low vision and their family and friends to help them learn how vision rehabilitation services can help them maintain their independence and how to find these services. A second DVD is being developed for health professionals to help encourage them to refer their patients for vision rehabilitation services and how their patients can benefit from it. Again, these resources will be available at the end of the summer, so stay tuned for messages about those.

In addition to these resources that I mentioned we also have a wide variety of materials available for you to either order or download. You can visit the NEI publications catalog at the site on your screen here to find educational resources on eye health, disease topics that I mentioned but also on eye safety. So I encourage you to use these resources, put your own logos on them, distribute them through your community, and to get any of these materials for free all you have to do is simply send me an e-mail and tell me what you need and we’ll be happy to take care of it.

I want to mention that all of our educational materials and outreach efforts, whether they be articles, social media messages, public service announcements, all point the public to the NEI public education site for more information. These pages are available in English and Spanish and include information about age-related eye diseases and conditions, comprehensive dilated eye exams and common vision problems, diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, low vision, but also financial assistance for eye care, tips for finding an eye doctor, or tips for keeping your eyes healthy. If you have health information for the public on your own website you may want to include a link to these pages on your own website to augment the information that you provide to people who visit your site.

In addition to educational resources for the public we also want to reach out and share educational information with our partners and other health professionals to help you better understand the populations we all serve. As part of the NEHEP survey results that I talked about earlier, many of you said that you wanted us to host Webinars. In response to that, we held our first Webinar last November during American Diabetes Month and discussed results from nationwide focus groups with people with diabetes. This past January we held a second Webinar about eye health knowledge and information preferences for people at risk for glaucoma. This Webinar too was based on nationwide focus group findings, and if you missed those Webinars they’re available for viewing on the NEHEP Website, and today’s Webinar will also be recorded and be available to you.

Another fun resource we have available for you is our healthy eyes quiz widget. Many of our Partners and other organizations use this quiz widget on their website to test eye health knowledge of their visitors. You can find a link to this on the NEHEP Website and instructions for adding it to your own site. The widget is updated periodically by NEHEP, so your visitors get new questions often and there’s no maintenance on your part. We also have YouTube videos available on seven topics, including age-related macular degeneration, cataract, common vision problems, comprehensive dilated eye exams, diabetic eye disease, dry eye, and glaucoma. Feel free to download and use them as part of your educational activities, link to them from your websites, or share them on your own social media channels.

Earlier I mentioned the NEHEP Facebook and Twitter pages. These are another great way for you to connect with us. Our social media sites promote a variety of eye health messages, offer eye health tips, and provide links to other resources. If you are on these platforms, please be sure to follow us on Facebook at “National Eye Health Education Program” and on Twitter, @NEHEP, and help share our messages, and we’re also happy to help share your messages as well.

So now let’s do a quick survey where you’ll be able to click on the screen and let us know which resources you use the most with your members and in your community. All you have to do is click on the screen. We can see the results immediately, so thank you for responding. This will be really helpful for us to see what you all need as we develop resources and materials for you. Now I’m going to turn things back over to Anne.

Thanks, Neyal. Now that we’ve given the Partnership this overview of NEHEP and samples of collaborations, we’d really like to learn more about what NEHEP can do for the Partnership. Our goal is really to avoid duplicating efforts and to build on each other’s strengths to make the NEHEP Partnership stronger and more united in addressing eye health. So let us know how we can help your organization, and what do you need to disseminate NEHEP messages and resources to the members of your organization or within your community.

We’re now going to open the phone lines and allow you to share your thoughts about your ideas, plans, or concerns regarding your role as a Partner.

I am getting one question. Do we post messages from NEHEP partners on your Facebook page? Yes, we absolutely do. If you have something you’re trying to promote and want to share with others, please send it to us and we’ll be happy to include it in those outlets.

Getting another question. We’re planning a training for our staff of 25; can NEHEP ship us bulk-order materials even if it exceeds the online order form quantities? Yes, the publications catalog if you go in there to order materials it asks you to pay for shipping and handling for bulk orders. But as a NEHEP Partnership organization again, you can bypass that and get materials for free. What you have to do is send an e-mail to me and tell me how many you need, and we’ll be happy to ship it to you, as many as you want free of charge. This is also the case for members of your organizations around the country too.

Can we adapt the PSAs for our local markets or the NEHEP publications by adding our organizations’ logos and phone numbers? Absolutely. All of our resources are there; we hope that you customize them and make them your own. Add your logos to them, use them in your own local communities; we just ask that you don’t change any content and if you do you have to let us know, but these materials are for you to use.

Any other questions? I was going to wrap this up but just let you know again we’ll be taking a look at your responses to the survey that we just distributed and get your responses and see what we can do to better meet your needs. But again, this is the first of a series of Webinars that we hope to do for the Partners. I just want to give a little plug for another Webinar we'll be doing for anyone interested in eye health on August 15th as part of our *Ojo con su vision!* Program, looking at enhancing eye health education among Hispanic/Latino audiences. You’ll see announcements from that through e-mails; I hope you can join us on that day. This Webinar is the first of a series that are just for partners. If there are other ideas and things that you want to help increase your engagement with NEHEP and to do more with us, please don’t hesitation to contact either Anne or myself. Anne, I can turn it over to you if you have any closing comments.

No, I would just like to thank everybody for joining us today and please, as Neyal said we are here to take your input, advice, and as they say you really need to keep an organization getting better because that is how you remain good and I really think Neyal has done a great job with taking NEHEP to the next levels. Please help us continue doing that with your input and advice and comments.

Thank you, Anne, and thanks to everybody for your participation. We certainly don’t want to duplicate efforts and we all want to build on our own strengths. So reach out to us, let us know how we can support each other and support each other’s efforts. I wish everyone a wonderful afternoon.