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## **DES MOINES-AREA OPTOMETRISTS PARTNER WITH SENS. HARKIN AND GRASSLEY; U.S. HOUSE LEADERS IN IMPROVING INFANT EYE AND VISION CARE**

*No-cost, comprehensive eye and vision assessments provided by InfantSEE® Program*

**Des Moines, I.A. (March 18, 2009)** – Due to the overwhelming number of children with eye and vision problems across the United States, Des Moines and surrounding area optometrists are devoting appointments to no-cost, comprehensive eye and vision assessments for infants between six to 12 months of age through InfantSEE®. InfantSEE®, a public health program developed by the American Optometric Association (AOA) in partnership with The Vision Care Institute™, LLC a Johnson & Johnson company, was designed to provide professional eye care for infants nationwide at no-cost, regardless of family income or number of eligible children.

“InfantSEE® is doing much more than identifying and treating risk factors that may cause eye and vision problems later in the life,” said Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA). “They are taking prevention to a new level to ensure healthier, thriving children and lower health care costs down the road.”

“I hope Iowa parents take advantage of this free public service to have their babies screened for potential vision problems,” said Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA). “Taking your children to see the doctor regularly promotes wellness and can help detect and prevent serious health issues.”

Leading members of the U.S. House of Representatives delegation from Iowa have also expressed their support for the InfantSEE® program. Reps. Tom Latham (R-IA), Leonard Boswell (D-IA), Steve King (R-IA), Dave Loebsack (D-IA), and Bruce Braley (D-IA) [urged local parents to have their infant’s eyes assessed during InfantSEE® Week](#).

To encourage parents to take advantage of the InfantSEE® program and to help protect infant vision and eye health, Governor Chet Culver has officially declared Monday, March 23 through Friday, March 27 InfantSEE® Week in the state of Iowa.

One in 10 children are at risk from undiagnosed eye and vision problems, which, if undetected, could lead to permanent vision impairment, and in rare cases, life-threatening health risks. However, only 14 percent of children from infancy to age six have had a comprehensive eye

assessment from an eye care professional. In Des Moines and surrounding areas, great strides are being made to ensure that potential eye and vision problems are detected early. InfantSEE® assessments have been available in Iowa since the InfantSEE® program launched in 2005.

“Many parents are surprised to learn that the first year of life is one of the most critical stages of a child’s visual development,” said Dr. Beth Triebel, a Des Moines-area optometrist and InfantSEE® provider. “It’s the ideal time to detect eye and vision problems before these conditions worsen or cause developmental delays.”

The program launched in 2005 with support from former President Jimmy Carter, honorary national chair. Nearly 8,000 optometrists nationwide volunteer their time to provide assessments to babies in their communities. The majority of vision problems detected included retinoblastoma (eye cancer), severe hyperopia (farsightedness), myopia (nearsightedness), congenital glaucoma and congenital cataract.

“There was no specific reason to believe that my daughter had any vision or eye health problems, but I wanted to do everything I could to ensure that my daughter was healthy and developing well,” said Lee Pietzsch, a mother whose daughter had an InfantSEE® assessment. “The InfantSEE® assessment gave me peace of mind. It is my hope that in the near future, a visit to an optometrist will become as important to parents as a routine well-care exam that an infant receives.”

To continue to improve infant eye assessment rates in Des Moines and surrounding areas, the following eye care providers will offer no-cost InfantSEE® eye assessments from March 23 to 27, by appointment:

**AMES**

Dr. Kristie Semrow  
3800 W. Lincoln Way  
515-292-4269

**ANKENY**

Dr. Jim Schroder  
111 NW 9th St.  
515-964-7355

**BELLEVUE**

Dr. Steve Sloan  
Dr. Martha Smith  
103 N. Riverview Dr.  
(563) 872-5975

**BOONE**

Dr. Jim Barker  
718 Story St.  
515-432-2020

Dr. Casey Roelfs  
621 Story St.  
515-432-2973

**CORALVILLE (Near Iowa City)**

Dr. Katalin Hotsenpiller  
1150 5<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 160  
319-337-0685

**CLIVE**

Dr. Ethan Huisman  
12871 University Ave., Ste. 140  
515-221-9195

**CRESTON**

Dr. Don McKim  
1610 W Townline St., Ste.115  
641-782-7619

**DES MOINES**

Dr. James W. Hartzell  
Dr. Blaine R. Brunsen  
2628 Beaver Ave.  
515-274-4141

**DUBUQUE**

Dr. Steve Sloan  
Dr. Martha Smith  
505 Cedar Cross Rd.  
(563) 556-3937

**EMMETSBURG**

Dr. Daniel Reedy  
2217 Main St.  
(712) 852-2979

**FORT DODGE**

Dr. Jeff Foreman  
1511 1st Ave. S  
515-955-7777

**FORT MADISON**

Dr. Kristin Maus  
914 Ave. G  
319-372-5181

**GREENFIELD**

Dr. Robert A. Weiland  
107 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
515-743-6222

**HIAWATHA**

Dr. Mark T. Mentzer  
Dr. Patrick J. Fleming  
2200 Blairs Ferry Crossing  
319-294-9546

**HUMBOLDT**

Dr. Daniel Reedy  
Hwy 169 N  
(515) 332-2020

**INDIANOLA**

Dr. Jonathan Anderson  
225 W. Ashland, Ste. 1  
515-961-5305

**LE MARS**

Dr. Becky DeRuyter  
1111 Holton Dr.  
712-546-6868

**MARSHALLTOWN**

Dr. Tara Cooper  
Dr. Abie Chadderdon  
Dr. Connie Feldman  
501 E. Main St.  
641-752-1511

**PELLA**

Dr. Ralph DeHaan  
823 Franklin St.  
641-628-9225

**SHELDON**

Dr. Del Spronk  
Dr. Harlan Vander Griend  
928 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
712-324-2552

**URBANDALE**

Dr. Melissa Billings  
Dr. Wendy Muller  
Dr. Beth Triebel  
2699 86<sup>th</sup> St.  
515-270-2490

Dr. Wendianne M. Wilson  
4660 86<sup>th</sup> St.  
515-727-6340

**WEST DES MOINES**

Dr. Barbara Scheetz  
5958 Ashworth Rd.  
515-440-4610

**WINTERSET**

Dr. Joseph W. Johll  
102 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
515-462-1254

InfantSEE® assessments are complementary to the routine well-care exams a baby receives from a pediatrician or family physician. Optometrists have the training to identify areas of risk that are critical to vision development and the skills to identify conditions that might not be detected in a routine pediatric wellness exam. In some cases, conditions may need to be monitored, immediately treated or referred to a pediatric eye specialist.

To learn more about InfantSEE®, visit [www.InfantSEE.org](http://www.InfantSEE.org).

***About InfantSEE®***

InfantSEE® is a public health program managed by Optometry's Charity™ — the AOA Foundation. Designed to ensure that eye and vision care become an integral part of infant wellness and improve a child's quality of life, doctors of optometry provide one eye and vision assessment to infants free-of-charge regardless of socioeconomic status. For more information visit [infantsee.org](http://infantsee.org).

***About the American Optometric Association***

American Optometric Association doctors of optometry are highly qualified, trained doctors, on the frontline of eye health and vision care, who examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases and disorders of the eye. In addition to providing eye and vision care, optometrists play a major role in an individual's overall health and well-being by detecting systemic diseases. Doctors of optometry have the skills and training to provide more than two-thirds of all primary eye care in the United States. The American Optometric Association represents more than 36,000 doctors of optometry, optometry students and paraoptometric assistants and technicians in nearly 6,500 communities across the country. For more information, visit [www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org).

***About The Vision Care Institute***

The Vision Care Institute of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care Inc. is an innovative educational resource created to prepare optometry students for a successful transition into the real world of delivering quality eye care, as well as to assist practicing Eye Care Professionals in the growth and development of their practice. The state-of-the-art facility gives participants a rare opportunity to gain first-hand experience with the latest in vision diagnostic and treatment technologies through hands-on contact lens instruction. Besides clinical training, participants also concentrate on communication skills. The curriculum, taught by leading eye care practitioners from around the country, gives participants the skills and confidence necessary to excel in today's professional practice. The Vision Care Institute has hosted students from all 19 of the schools and colleges of optometry throughout North America at its headquarters in Jacksonville, Florida.

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