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MEDIA CONTACT: Jon Minners (212) 602-4152 jminners@aging.nyc.gov

NYC Coalition on Aging and Vision launches a website designed for those needing vision rehabilitation

New site helps connect seniors, their caregivers and health professionals to information and referrals around vision rehabilitation

NEW YORK, NY (September 9, 2015)—About 2.9 million U.S. seniors are affected by vision impairment and the number of seniors with vision loss is expected to double in the next three decades. In response, the NYC Coalition on Aging and Vision launched a website at <u>www.nycvisioncoalition.org/</u> to help older adults with vision loss receive individualized referrals to vision rehabilitation services.

Since its founding in 2007, the NYC Coalition on Aging and Vision, through its founding members, has provided valuable services and helpful resources to thousands of New Yorkers 55 years of age and older with vision loss. Founding members are ANYF, Catholic Guild for the Blind, Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Lighthouse Guild, SUNY College of Optometry, VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the NYC Department for the Aging.

The website, a central resource for both professionals and the public at large, was designed to make it easier for seniors with vision loss to learn about and access the multitude of services offered by the leading vision rehabilitation providers in New York City. The content covers topics such as vision rehabilitation therapy, orientation and mobility training, coping with vision loss, and information about local support groups. It also provides links to numerous articles about living with vision loss.

Despite the documented need, benefit and availability of resources, rehabilitative services for people with vision loss are largely underutilized, according to the Vision Coalition, whose founding members estimate that far less than 10% of those with vision loss access vision rehabilitation services.

The Vision Coalition's mission is to connect elders to these services, and to work collaboratively to reach a larger number of older New Yorkers who would benefit from developing skills that can help them make best use of their remaining vision.

The new website was funded by generous grants from The New York Community Trust and Reader's Digest Partners for Sight Foundation to the Aging in New York Fund (ANYF), the lead partner of the Vision Coalition.

"ANYF is proud to manage the Coalition and to have supported its transformation from a small demonstration program into an independent, strong and active partnership between the leaders in the field of vision rehabilitation," said Caryn Resnick, Secretary of the Board of ANYF. "We are helping seniors with vision loss learn about and access the skills and tools they need to continue doing what they love to do."

Empowering those with vision loss is of great concern to an increasingly aging population in need of vision rehabilitation services. Presently, over 40 million Americans are 65 years of age and older. It is estimated that by 2030, this number will grow to about 70 million. With this increase, there will come a growing incidence of vision loss due to such conditions as diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration, and glaucoma. Vision rehabilitation services make it possible for older adults to lead more independent and productive lives.

"Vision rehabilitation services change lives," said Resnick. "The NYC Coalition on Aging and Vision's new website ensures that all visually impaired older New Yorkers, as well as their family caregivers and professionals, are able to access a full range of information and services."

To view the website, go to http://www.nycvisioncoalition.org/.

About Aging in New York Fund

The Aging in New York Fund is an independent 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for older New Yorkers and their families. Seniors need more opportunities to age in place and live more connected, vibrant and healthy lives. ANYF's innovative programming, created to address the evolving needs of today's seniors, include educational forums on healthcare reform and the aging connection, food-insecurity awareness among our elderly community panels, "It's My Money!" a computer-based financial literacy, and "Bridging the Gap," a curriculum for intergenerational community service.

Media Contact: Jon Minners (212) 602-4152 Yolanda Rodriguez (212) 602-4153