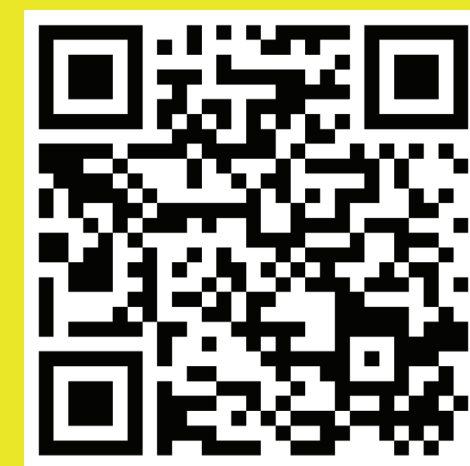


# Patient-Centered Eye Care: Elevating Eye Care Practice Through the ASPECT Patient Engagement Program

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**A = Advocacy**  
**S = Support**  
**P = Perspective**  
**E = Empowerment**  
**C = Communication**  
**T = Training**



## BACKGROUND: What is the ASPECT Patient Engagement Program?

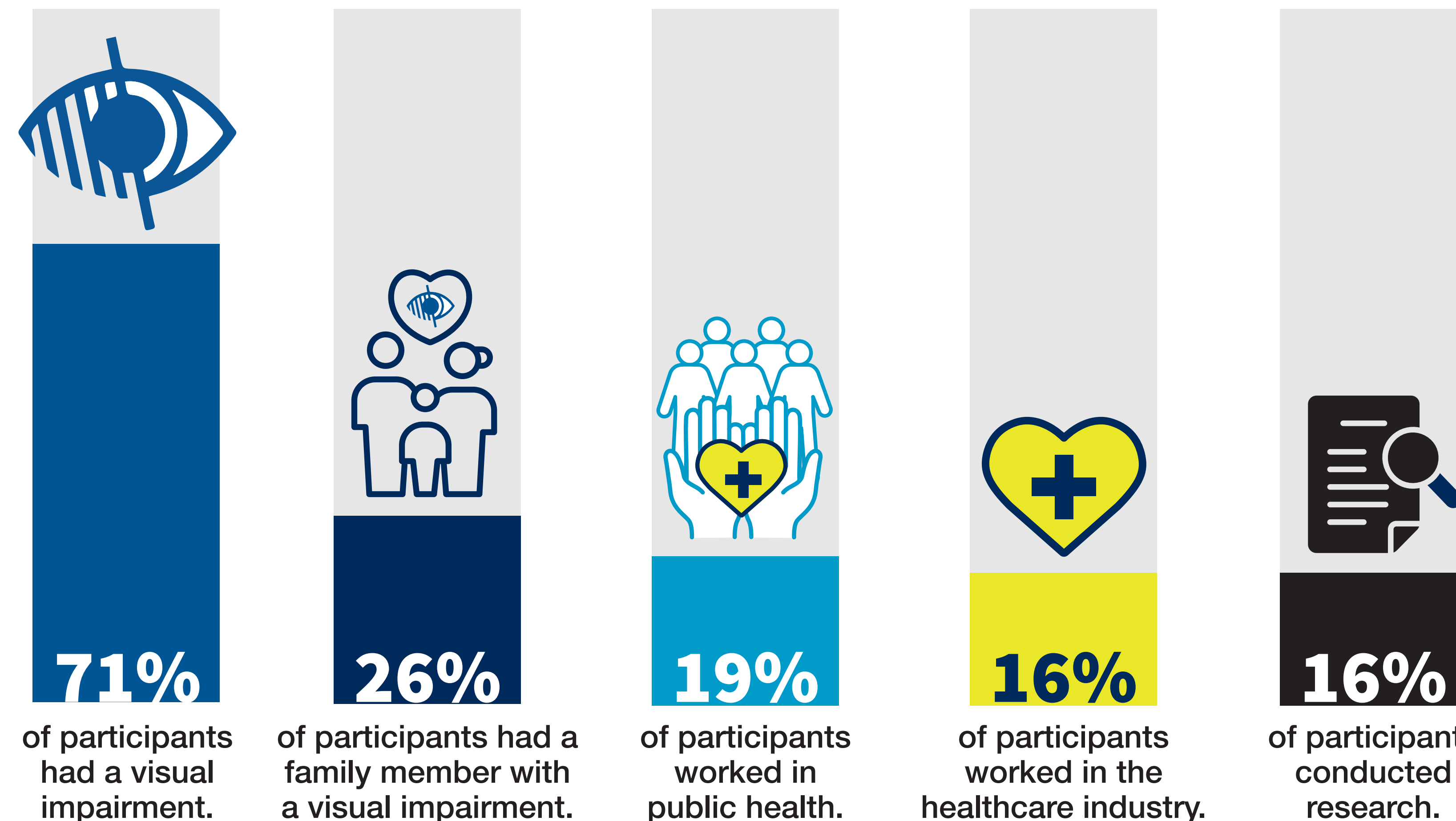
In 2020, Prevent Blindness developed the ASPECT Program to strengthen our patient empowerment efforts for vision into a coordinated program.

The **GOAL** of the ASPECT Program is to equip participants with knowledge and skills to advocate for eye health improvements at all levels. Germaine to the training is storytelling, how to develop and use one's personal story as a tool for advocacy whether at the individual, state, or federal level.

In 2023, a comprehensive evaluation to measure the program's impact was conducted by an outside evaluator.

## METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS:

In spring 2023, eight focus groups and one structured interview was conducted. *Many of the 31 participants identified with more than one identifying characteristic.*



## FUTURE RESEARCH: Opportunities for Improvement or Further Research

Focus group members recommended ways in which Prevent Blindness can strengthen the program including:

- Providing materials in multiple formats (e.g., slide decks, podcasts)
- Structuring breakout room activities and allowing time for small groups to report back
- Giving participants telling their stories the choice of receiving feedback orally or in writing
- Inviting trainees to meet socially outside of structured sessions
- Establishing communication opportunities once training is completed

Research is needed to examine how graduates utilize learned skills when advocating at the individual, state, or federal level.

## CONCLUSION:

The goal of the ASPECT Program is to equip participants with advocacy-related knowledge and skills to advocate for eye health improvements at all levels. 128 individuals from diverse backgrounds have graduated from the ASPECT Program.

Benefits of the ASPECT Program for patients and allies include:

- Developing storytelling skills to deliver one's message impactfully and succinctly to a variety of audiences.
- Building advocacy-related skills to advocate for one's own eye health as well as that of others.
- Developing skills to influence state and national legislation related to eye health.
- Feeling a sense of community.

Additional research is needed to examine how patient engagement program graduates utilize learned skills when advocating at the individual, state-based, and/or federal level.

## CONTACT INFORMATION AND SPONSORS:

The evaluation of the ASPECT Patient Engagement Program was sponsored by the Lavelle Fund for the Blind and the Reader's Digest Partners For Sight Foundation.



## PARTICIPANTS: Who Participates in the ASPECT Program?

Participants include:

- Individuals with visual impairments
- Family members of individuals with visual impairments
- Eye health and medical providers (optometrists, ophthalmologists, primary health care, OT's, etc.)\*
- Public health, social service, mental health, and other personnel
- Researchers

\* Of 128 participants who have graduated from the program, 18 have been eye health providers or studying to be an ophthalmologist or optometrist.

## Benefits of the ASPECT Program for patients and allies include:



Developing storytelling skills to deliver one's message impactfully and succinctly to a variety of audiences.



Building advocacy-related skills to advocate for one's own eye health as well as that of others.



Developing skills to influence state and national legislation related to eye health.



Feeling a sense of community.

## Hearing the stories of others builds broader understanding

"[Hearing others' stories] gave me a lot of perspective as to how I can help my clients better as well as advocate to physicians to be able to tell my story better and help more people."

– a healthcare provider

## RESULTS: Strengths of the ASPECT Program

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS: Questions Guiding 2023 Program Evaluation Study

1. How have ASPECT graduates leveraged their new skills as a vision advocate to improve eye health for themselves (if applicable), family members (if applicable), those in their community, and/or on the state or national level?
2. What do ASPECT graduates view as the strengths of the ASPECT Program and what recommendations do they have for strengthening and expanding the program?
3. What is viewed by ASPECT graduates as the benefits of peer-to-peer connections they have developed?

### A community that can support patients with their eye health

"I was on my last appeal for the only drug to treat my [eye] condition. I remember in the first meeting I was going to cry. Being part of the group and hearing [others' experiences] just felt like there was a comradery of people dealing with different eye problems."

– an individual with a visual impairment

### Patients sharing with allies and allies sharing with patients

"A young intern was in our group and he said, '[Hearing from ASPECT participants] is going to change my experience as an optometrist.'"

– individual with a visual impairment

### Patients and allies engaged in systems improvement

"I was getting nowhere [advocating with drug companies for a medication I needed for my eye disease] and I needed to figure out how to tailor my conversations and be more effective. I was able to take my 20+ years of dealing with my eye disease and tailor who I talk to and how I talk to them.... ASPECT helped me to be able to talk to my insurance company in a less emotional way and to give them more facts. It helped me hone my skills to advocate on all levels."

– an individual with a visual impairment



**Prevent Blindness**  
 ASPECT Patient Engagement Program

For more information on the ASPECT Program or this work, contact:

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