

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
ALPINE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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December 22, 2006

Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 6500  
Modesto, CA 95354

RE: Request for Adoption of Resolution Acknowledging January 2007 as *National Glaucoma Awareness Month*

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors:

At its meeting November 21, 2006, the Alpine County Board of Supervisors adopted the attached resolution acknowledging January as "*National Glaucoma Awareness Month*."

Glaucoma is a little known public health issue in the United States, affecting at least 2 million people. It is the second leading cause of blindness and the leading cause of blindness among people of color, including African-Americans, Asians, Latinos and Native Americans. Yet it is estimated that half of those suffering from the disease in this country remain undiagnosed.

The Board of Supervisors of Alpine County requests that your county adopt a similar resolution or proclamation to bring public awareness to this important public health issue. There is no cure for glaucoma and vision loss is irreversible. Several non-profit organizations provide information and resources to persons interested in learning more about "the silent thief of sight," including California's oldest organization committed to preserving vision and independence of all persons, the Glaucoma Research Foundation ([www.glaucoma.org](http://www.glaucoma.org)), and Prevent Blindness America ([www.preventblindness.net](http://www.preventblindness.net)).

Should your County support our request, please send copies of your resolution to the following:

Glaucoma Research Foundation  
251 Post Street, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94108

Prevent Blindness America  
211 West Wacker Drive – Suite 1700  
Chicago, IL 60606

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Günter E. Kaiser  
Chair

Enclosure

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
2006 DEC 28 P 2:13

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, )  
COUNTY OF ALPINE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, )  
AKNOWLEDGING JANUARY AS "NATIONAL )  
GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH" )

RESOLUTION NO. 2006 -52

WHEREAS, January is designated as "National Glaucoma Awareness Month" in the United States; and

WHEREAS, glaucoma is a group of progressively degenerative eye diseases that damages the optic nerve in the eye, leading to vision loss and eventually blindness; and

WHEREAS, glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world according to the World Health Organization, and the number one leading cause of preventable blindness in the United States among African-Americans and people of color, including Native American populations; and

WHEREAS, more than 2.2 million Americans age 40 and older have glaucoma, and 120,000 Americans are blind from glaucoma, accounting for 12% of all cases of blindness in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, there is presently no cure for glaucoma.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED WHEREAS, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alpine, State of California, finds that raising glaucoma awareness through public education and outreach programs is critical to the treatment of eye disease and the prevention of blindness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Alpine, State of California, hereby recognize January as *National Glaucoma Awareness Month* and encourage its constituent families and neighbors, employees and all citizens to protect their vision by getting regular and complete eye examinations from qualified eye care professionals, and to support research and educational opportunities that lead to an eventual cure.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 5<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2006 at Markleeville, California by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors Jardine, Veatch, Woodrow, Kaiser;

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Supervisor Bennett.

COUNTY OF ALPINE

Gunter E. Kaiser  
Günter E. Kaiser, Chair, Board of Supervisors,  
County of Alpine, State of California

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Barbara K. Jones  
Barbara K. Jones, County Clerk  
And ex officio Clerk of the Board of  
Supervisors

Martin Fine  
Martin Fine, County Counsel

small changes in IOP translate to retinal ganglion cell survival in hopes of identifying new therapeutic targets.

In another published report, CFC researchers identified interleukin-6 (IL-6)—a type of “signaling” protein released by microglia in the retina that can act to both increase and decrease neuronal survival—to be an important factor in the reduction of retinal ganglion cell death caused by elevated eye pressure.

These new CFC studies support the notion that as a neurodegenerative disease, glaucoma shares common disease mechanisms and characteristics with other neurological injuries and disorders. In particular, the CFC has identified both IL-6 and microglia as potential targets for therapeutics aimed at promoting health and survival of retinal cells in glaucoma.



Dr. Moses Chao, Chair of the CFC Scientific Advisory Board, thanked GRF's donors for supporting research at the CFC Annual Dinner.

to compare broad genetic changes in the retina that occur with age-related increases in intraocular pressure (IOP), and found that one of the most robust changes in gene expression occurs in a family of genes associated with inflammation and known to be involved in diseases of the brain, such as Alzheimer's disease. As a result of this study, the CFC is pursuing a possible treatment that is known to suppress inflammation in brain disease.

CFC investigators also examined the survival of retinal ganglion cell axons at different ages and IOP levels, and their results indicated two important facts that were previously unknown. First, a lengthy period of elevated IOP is not necessary to kill the axons; even in young optic

nerves, elevated IOP is sufficient to induce degeneration. And second, small differences in IOP lead to small differences in axon survival. These factors indicate that even subtle changes in IOP could affect how the optic nerve functions in the eye with glaucoma. As a follow-up to this study, CFC researchers are now working to understand the mechanism that could underlie how



ALPINE COUNTY NATIVE

Melissa Baker

One of three Honorary Co-Chairs of GRF's Catalyst For a Cure campaign, Melissa was diagnosed with glaucoma at age 15. Melissa volunteers with her mother to help raise funds and awareness: "It's cool to spread education about glaucoma."