**Funding for this Program**

This is a **FREE** screening for all participants!
Funding for this program is made possible by the Lions of Illinois Foundation, local Lions Clubs, The Lions Club International Foundation, Illinois Retina Associates and Ingalls Memorial Hospital.

**Vision Statement:**
The Vision of the Lions of Illinois Foundation is to create a permanent vehicle for the delivery of services to the visually & hearing impaired.

**Mission Statement:**
*The Lions of Illinois Foundation exists to assist in the general improvement of the quality of life of those individuals in Illinois having unmet needs. It is the specific mission of the Foundation to provide quality programs & services to the people of Illinois for the detection, treatment, & rehabilitation of visual & hearing impairments. The Foundation, solely, or in conjunction with the Lions/ Lioness Clubs, foundations, and other organizations, shall provide its assistance through grant processes or or delivered through direct or indirect programs & services.*

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**Early Detection Is the Key!**

If you have diabetes it is vital that you have your eyes checked regularly. At first, diabetic retinopathy may cause no symptoms or only mild vision problems.

However if left untreated, it can get worse and cause loss of vision or even in severe cases, blindness. Research has shown that early detection greatly enhances the visual prognosis and treatment outcome for all Diabetic Retinopathy patients.

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**Diabetic Retinopathy**

Regular eye screening for diabetic retinopathy can help prevent vision loss and blindness.
Diabetic Retinopathy is an eye condition occurring most often in people with Type 1 or 2 diabetes. This eye complication causes progressive damage to the retina which are the blood vessels of light sensitive tissue located at the back of the eye.

**Diabetic Retinopathy is classified into two types:**

**Non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy (NPDR):** is the early stage where symptoms will be mild or non-existent. In NPDR, the blood vessels in the retina are weakened. This causes tiny bulges or microanuerysms which can leak fluid and blood into the retina. If swelling occurs in the central part of the retina or macula, it is known as macular edema.

**Proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR):** is the most severe stage because abnormal blood vessels grow and leak into the center of the retina or vitreous humour. Scar tissue forms and may cause the retina to detach. Pressure may build, causing glaucoma. This can damage the nerve that carries images from your eye to your brain’s optic nerve.

As this eye condition progresses, some symptoms of diabetic retinopathy may include:

- Spots or floaters (dark strings floating in your vision)
- Blurred vision
- Fluctuating vision
- Dark or empty areas in your vision
- Night blindness
- Difficulty with perceiving different colors

If you experience any of these symptoms it’s advised that you contact your eye care professional as soon as possible.

The Lions of Illinois Foundation provides a free screening equipped with a photographer and a non-mydriatic eye camera. This camera takes photographs of the back of a person’s eye. These photographs are then forwarded to Illinois Retina Associates for review by one of its retinal specialists who will look for any abnormalities. These specialists have advanced training in the diagnosis and treatment of Diabetic Retinopathy. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for test results by mail.