In March, Glaucoma Awareness and Research Take Center Stage on Capitol Hill, the NIH Campus, and Throughout the World

World Glaucoma Day
March 6 marks the first-ever World Glaucoma Day, and NAEVR is working with the World Glaucoma Patients Association and the American Glaucoma Society (AGS) to foster awareness of the incidence and economic burden of the disease, as well as to highlight breakthrough research being conducted by the NEI. In conjunction with the AGS, NAEVR has worked with the offices of Cong. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Cong. Pete Sessions (R-TX) on a bipartisan House resolution recognizing this important day.

AGS Advocacy Day and Congressional Briefing/Screening
Two of the more than 300 events being planned worldwide at 52 sites on March 6 include an Advocacy Day and a Congressional Briefing/Screening, both hosted by the AGS on Capitol Hill. At this time, the AGS has requested more than 100 appointments with Congressional offices to educate about glaucoma and to request increased FY2009 NIH/NEI funding, using NAEVR’s position paper and fact sheets. The Congressional Briefing entitled Glaucoma: Awareness and Early Detection Can Prevent Blindness will feature real-time optic nerve and pressure evaluation of the eye.

NEI/FDA CDER Glaucoma Clinical Drug Trial Design and Endpoints Symposium
Both NAEVR and ARVO have worked with the NEI and the FDA to develop this meeting, to be held March 13-14 on the NIH campus, to explore how new outcomes measures may facilitate glaucoma therapy clinical trials. The meeting, which grew out of the successful November 2006 Ophthalmic Clinical Trial Design and Endpoints meeting that focused on AMD and diabetic retinopathy, had the participation of both drug and device approval staff within the FDA in initial planning sessions. For meeting details, visit www.arvo.org/endpoints

OCT Focus Highlights NEI and NIBIB Collaboration
The use of Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) to evaluate physiological changes in the optic nerve head will be the focus of two upcoming events—a February 26 AEVR Congressional Briefing entitled Visual Imaging: Revolutionizing the Diagnosis and Treatment of Eye Disease featuring Alex Walsh, M.D. (Doheny Eye Institute/University of Southern California) and the March 13-14 NEI/FDA CDER Glaucoma Clinical Drug Trial Design and Endpoints Symposium.

The development of OCT can be traced to the collaborative efforts of two NIH Institutes—the NEI and the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB). On January 7, NAEVR worked with the Coalition for Imaging and Bioengineering Research (CBIR, which serves as “Friends of NIBIB”), to engage NEI and NIBIB in discussions about these upcoming events.