On September 23, AEVR’s Decade of Vision 2010-2020 Initiative hosted an International AMD Awareness Week 2010 Congressional Briefing with a truly global nature, as it was co-hosted by the AMD Alliance International (AMDAI), the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), and the European Vision Institute (EVI). AMDAI’s Allie Laban-Baker described a March 2010 report by her organization which estimated that 33 million people worldwide currently experience vision impairment from AMD at a direct healthcare cost of $255 billion.

Featured speaker Hendrik Scholl, M.D., Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins University and formerly at the University of Bonn, provided international perspectives from his clinical and research activities in Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A clinician scientist, he not only gave an overview of basic and translational research into AMD—much of which is funded by the NEI—he also discussed differences in biomedical research funding mechanisms between Europe and the U.S. The comprehensive nature of his discussion prompted numerous staff members to publicly state that it was the best briefing they had attended this year.

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Fifteen years ago, there was not a lot new in AMD research, but now it is one of the hottest areas. - Dr. Hendrik Scholl

Dr. Scholl concluded by describing the fragmented nature of governmental funding for European-based biomedical research in comparison to the centralized nature of federal funding in the U.S. “Funding is only available from the European Commission if it has first issued a specific ‘call’ for that type of research,” he stated, also noting that public funding mechanisms can vary between countries and even states within those countries.

**AEVR Co-sponsors Vision Partner Congressional Briefings**

On July 14, Michael Fischer, O.D., F.A.A.O. (Northport Veterans Affairs Medical Center) spoke about low vision and why adequate reimbursement for low vision rehabilitation services up-front could save Medicare program costs downstream

On September 16, Sandra Block, O.D., Ph.D. (Illinois College of Optometry, far left) and Victoria Quinn, Ph.D. (Helen Keller International, far right) spoke about the domestic and international aspects of children’s vision care. They are joined by event co-sponsors, including NAEVR’s David Epstein (second left).

Speakers at the September 29 briefing addressed the danger of ultraviolet rays to vision, including Peter Keohoe, O.D. (Past President of the American Optometric Association), Drusilla Hufford (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), Congressional Vision Caucus Co-Chair Cong. Gene Green (D-TX), Kovin Naidoo (International Centre for Eyecare Education), PBA CEO Hugh Parry, and Vincent Young, M.D. (Albert Einstein Medical Center)