

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ALPINE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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2006 DEC 27 AM 10:45

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COPY SENT TO MEMBERS
FOR THEIR INFORMATION

DATE 12/27/06

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
ALPINE COUNTY

December 22, 2006

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

RE: Request for Adoption of Resolution Acknowledging January 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 the California's oldest organization committed to preserving vision and independence of all Americans, the Glaucoma Research Foundation (www.glaucoma.org), and Prevent Blindness America (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

Günter E. Kaiser
Chair

Enclosure



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

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.



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."

* Lake Tahoe Community College
Student ; Volunteer, BLIND SKI
AT TAHOE *