**Glossary**

**Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)** - An eye disease that causes damage to the macula as an individual ages, resulting in blurred and diminished sight in the center of the field of vision.

**Assistive and adaptive device** - Equipment, technology, or software that is specially designed for people with disabilities to learn, communicate, or function better, with the goal of maintaining or improving their independence.

**Cataract** – An eye disease in which the lens of the eye becomes cloudy, resulting in blurred vision.

**Comprehensive eye exam** – An eye exam performed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist that includes a number of tests to assess overall vision and eye health.

**Diabetic retinopathy (DR)** – An eye disease that is a complication of diabetes, in which damage occurs to blood vessels in the back of the eye (retina).

**Dilated eye exam** – An exam that uses eye drops to widen the pupil of the eye so that the structures in the back of the eye can be viewed more clearly.

**Dry eye disease (DED)** – A chronic condition that can occur when the eyes are inadequately lubricated due to poor tear quality or quantity.

**Endocrinologist** – A doctor specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the endocrine glands and hormones.

**Free radicals** – Unstable atoms that can damage cells, causing illness and aging.

**Glaucoma** – A group of eye disorders characterized by damage to the optic nerve, often associated with increased eye pressure.

**Macula** – A the part of the light-sensitive tissue in the back of the eye that is responsible for central vision.

**Macular edema** – An eye disease where fluid builds up in the macula, affecting central vision.

**Ophthalmologist** – A medical doctor who specializes in eyes that can provide complete eye care, including comprehensive eye exams, corrective lens prescriptions, treatment of complex eye diseases, and eye surgery.

**Optician** – A vision care professional who makes and supplies corrective lenses, such as glasses and contacts.

**Optic nerve** – The nerve that transmits visual information from the eye to the brain, allowing sight.

**Optometrist** – A eye care practitioner that can perform comprehensive eye exams to evaluate and treat common eye disorders and diseases, assess the clarity of your vision, and prescribe corrective lenses.

**Patient navigator** – A person who helps guide patients through the health care system; also known as patient advocate.

**Prior authorization** – A process used by some health insurance companies that requires the review and approval of a specific procedure, service, or drug before it is prescribed.

**Pupil** – The hole in the center of the eye that allows light to enter the eye.

**Refractive error** – A common eye disorder in which the eye cannot clearly focus on external images, resulting in nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, or presbyopia.

**Retina** – The thin layer of cells at the back of the eye that sense light and send the image information to the brain through the optic nerve.

**Sclera** – The white of the eye.

**Step therapy** – A strategy used by health insurers to help contain rising healthcare costs, where prescribed treatment for a medical condition is first authorized for a lower-cost treatment, and then progresses “step-wise” to other therapies, if needed. This approach is sometimes called “fail first” because patients must try and “fail” lower-cost treatments before gaining access to the treatment their clinician originally prescribed.

**Thyroid gland** – An endocrine gland in the neck that helps regulate the body’s metabolism through thyroid hormone production.

**Thyroid eye disease (TED)** – An autoimmune condition in which the body’s immune system attacks healthy tissue in and around the eye, causing progressive inflammation and damage particularly to the extraocular muscle, connective, and fatty tissue.

**Vision rehab specialist** – An eye care professional that helps people with vision impairments learn how to use assistive technology and develop skills to successfully manage living with impaired vision.