Steven Kelley CVRT, CRC

skelley4195@yahoo.com

February is Low Vision Awareness Month

**February is Low Vision and Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Awareness Month. AMD is the leading cause of vision loss among Americans age 60 and older and may affect as much as 30% of the population over the age of 75, according to the National Eye Institute. Currently 15 million Americans are affected by AMD, and this number is expected to double by 2020, primarily as a result of an aging population.**

**Individuals with AMD, may also have *low vision* as a result of vision loss caused by AMD. Low vision may also be the result of many other eye diseases, such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. *Low vision* is a term used to describe vision that is not correctable by conventional means.**

**Many activities of daily living, such as driving, reading the newspaper, seeing the computer screen, etc., may be negatively impacted by low vision.**

**Unfortunately, many people with low vision are completely unaware of the highly trained vision rehabilitation professionals who are available to assist them, either through state agencies, or local non-profits.**

**These vision rehabilitation specialists are highly educated and often hold advanced degrees in their professions, with additional certifications. These professionals may include:**

* **Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (CVRT) who work with clients on adapted daily living skills;**
* **Certified Low Vision Therapists (CLVT) who work with clients to use optical devices such as magnifiers and hand-held telescopes;**
* **Certified Orientation and Mobility Instructors (COM) who work with clients to travel safely and with confidence.**

**Many people are surprised to learn there is usually no fee to work with these professionals and referrals can be made directly by the client—a referral from the eye doctor is not required. Federal and state funding ensure these services are available, and may be delivered right in the home or workplace.**

To search for a vision rehabilitation professional near you, go to the **Vision Aware Directory of Services at** <http://www.visionaware.org/directory.aspx>**. Be sure to mark your calendar for Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (VRT) Awareness Week, April 11-17, 2016.**