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NATIONAL VISION HEALTH MONTH

Statement by:

The Honourable Wilfred P. Moore

Thursday, May 28, 2015

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NATIONAL VISION HEALTH MONTH

Hon. Wilfred P. Moore: Honourable senators, I rise today to speak in the month of May, which has been recognized as National Vision Health Month, and to congratulate our former colleague, the Honourable Asha Seth and the Canadian National Institute of the Blind for their hard work in making this important issue known to Canadians.

As many of you may know, the CNIB began in the aftermath of the Halifax Explosion, when over 1,000 people lost their eyesight or suffered eye damage due to flying shattered glass resulting from that December 6, 1917, blast. That event, coupled with the return home to Nova Scotia of many World War I veterans with eye injuries, stirred a group of caring volunteers into action. Their work led to the inclusion of those who suffer from blindness in society and to spreading awareness of the difficulties of the vision-impaired in leading a life alongside those who have healthy vision.

National Vision Health Month seeks to achieve more than understanding the problems faced by blind Canadians. There's also the goal of spreading awareness to those of us with vision that healthy eyesight is not a given. We must constantly strive to maintain the health of our eyes for they not only provide us with

sight but also with the warning signs that other health problems are afoot, like diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Honourable senators, one in seven Canadians will develop a serious eye disease in their lifetime. Many of these diseases can be detected only through a comprehensive eye exam. The older we become, the more the chance of eye problems developing. All this to say: Take care of your vision and have your eyes examined. Visit your optometrist regularly.

National Vision Health Month also recognizes individuals and organizations who champion the cause of healthy eyesight through the Vision Champion Award, which is presented by the Canadian Association of Optometrists. The inaugural winner this May is Pat Davidson, Member of Parliament for Sarnia—Lambton. Ms. Davidson has worked tirelessly to promote and protect the vision of Canadians. Her private member's bill, which brought cosmetic contact lenses under the same regulation as prescription lenses, is only one example of her efforts. Our congratulations go to Ms. Davidson and to all those who work to promote healthy eyesight in Canada.

I dedicate this statement to my recently departed friend and my optometrist, Dr. Thom Lawrence, late of Chester Basin, Nova Scotia.