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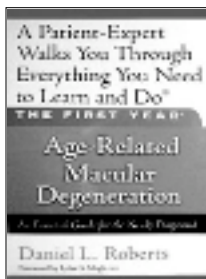
# International MD Support Group **NEWSLETTER**

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### IMDSG Source Book



Age-Related Macular Degeneration  
by  
Daniel L. Roberts

The IMDSG is sponsored by  
**LowVision.com**  
and the  
**Macular Degeneration Foundation**

## From the Director

This month we are mailing flyers to nearly 9,000 retirement centers and senior organizations encouraging them to provide this free IMDSG program for their residents. We are also personally contacting CEOs of more than 20 retirement community corporations to enlist their support. I can think of no better way to reach senior adults who might otherwise have no connection to this important lifeline.

Almost 25% of people over age 65 are affected at some level by macular degeneration. It is a disease that not only robs us of our eyesight, but it can significantly lower our quality of life if we allow it.

Well, we're not *going* to allow it. Much can be done to help us maintain our value and independence, and that is the main focus of our presentations this coming year. I hope you will help spread the word in your community and that you will take advantage of everything we have to offer in 2008. Also, don't forget to thank your group leaders for their caring and devotion to this effort. Without them, and without the support of our wonderful sponsors, the IMDSG would not be possible.

Best wishes to everyone for a healthy, wealthy and wise 2008!

*Dan Roberts*



**Welcome to our newest affiliates!**

**Independent Living Center .....Homer, Alaska  
Envision Rehabilitation Center ..... Wichita, Kansas**

**News Briefs**



**Genentech and Physicians Reach Compromise on Avastin Distribution**

In collaboration with the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and the American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS), Genentech has provided an update on its efforts to address physician questions about access to Avastin after January 1, 2008. This is another positive outcome of Genentech's talks with the AAO and ASRS to understand physicians' concerns about the recent change in the delivery method of Avastin.

A compromise has been reached wherein physicians can now prescribe Avastin and purchase it directly from authorized wholesale distributors who can then ship to the destination of the physician's choice. This includes hospital pharmacies, compounding pharmacies or the physician's office. This process is one that the AAO and ASRS believe addresses the needs of their members.

Genentech continues to believe Lucentis is the most appropriate treatment for patients with wet AMD, because it was specifically designed, formally studied, approved by the FDA and manufactured specifically for treatment of the disease. Still, Genentech believes that physicians should be able to prescribe the treatment they believe is most appropriate for their patients.

The full update is posted on the Genentech website at [www.gene.com/gene/features/avastin/press-statement.html](http://www.gene.com/gene/features/avastin/press-statement.html).



## **VA Expands Low Vision Rehabilitation Training for Vets**

More than 1 million visually impaired U.S. veterans over the age of 45 will soon have access to low vision rehabilitation training through a new program of the Veterans Administration.

In a press release issued December 9, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson announced that the VA will make approximately \$40 million available during the next three years to establish a comprehensive nationwide rehabilitation system for veterans and active duty personnel with visual impairments. The system will enhance inpatient services and expand outpatient services throughout the 1,400 locations where VA provides health care.

Under the reorganization plan, each of VA's 21 regional networks (called Veterans Integrated Service Networks, or VISNs) will implement a plan to provide eye care to veterans with visual impairments ranging from 20/70 to total blindness. Basic low-vision services will be available at all VA eye clinics, and every network will offer intermediate and advanced low-vision services, including a full spectrum of optical devices and electronic visual aids.

This improvement in care for visually impaired veterans is a big step forward. It is in line with the objectives of the optimum low vision rehabilitation delivery model approved in the fall by executive boards of all four professional eye care and rehabilitation academies. Read more about the model and how low vision rehabilitation can help visually impaired people maximize their vision and maintain their quality of life.

**Next month:  
“Senior EZ Living”  
Charles Warren, MS  
Support Specialist, Low Vision Products**