



American Association of Eye & Ear Hospitals

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Executives at New York Eye and Ear Infirmary To Ring Opening Bell At New York Stock Exchange

Arlington, VA (February 13, 2008) — On Friday, February 15, 2008 executives from one of the member facilities of the American Association of Eye and Ear Hospitals (AAEEH), the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary (NYEEI), will visit the New York Stock Exchange to launch February's Low Vision Awareness Month and to announce the February 25th opening of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary Ear Institute. President and CEO of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, Mr. D. McWilliams Kessler, will mark these occasions by ringing the opening bell at 9:30AM EST. He will be joined by Peter Frelinghuysen, Chairman of the Board; Joseph Walsh, MD, Professor and Chairman of Ophthalmology; Steven D. Schaefer, MD, Professor and Chairman of Otolaryngology; and Ronald A. Hoffman, MD, Professor and Director, The Ear Institute.

As Low Vision Awareness Month, February is a time to highlight the importance of eye screenings for adults and children. Low-vision and blindness affects over 3 million Americans over the age of 40. This figure is expected to rise to 5.5 million by 2020. The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary is one of the country's leading providers of annual comprehensive eye examinations in preventing and/or delaying eye disease.

The official opening of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary Ear Institute will occur on the 25th of this month with a Ribbon Cutting Celebration. Hearing loss is the number one birth defect in the country, and continues to be a rapidly growing impairment among all age groups. The Ear Institute will serve as a crucial addition to the New York tri-state area in terms of comprehensive diagnostic and treatment resources for patients of all ages dealing with hearing loss.

Executive Director of the AAEEH, Robert Betz, PhD, said "the American Association of Eye and Ear Hospitals joins with the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary in recognizing Low Vision Awareness Month to educate the public and promote eye health. On behalf of the Board of Directors and all our members I want to congratulate New York Eye and Ear on the opening of the Ear Institute."

The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, founded in 1820 and located on 14th Street and Second Avenue in Manhattan, is the oldest specialty hospital in the Western Hemisphere and a recognized leader in treatment, research and education in Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology, and Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery. New York Eye and Ear performs more than 25,000 surgical procedures per year and sees approximately 165,000 outpatient visits annually in one of the nation's most extensive systems of eye, ear, nose and throat clinics.

The AAEEH is comprised of the premier institutions for specialized eye and ear procedures. These centers of excellence offer some of the most innovative teaching programs in the world, routinely treat the most severely ill eye and ear patients, and provide highly specialized services not available in general acute care hospitals.