



**For Immediate Release**

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**Award-Winning Alabama KidCheck Program Becomes a New  
Department of Sight Savers America**

BIRMINGHAM – Effective immediately, the award winning Alabama KidCheck Program has become a new department of Sight Savers America, an Alabama-based nonprofit, with the strong support of Governor Robert Bentley’s Administration and State School Superintendent, Dr. Joe Morton.

In February, a formal recommendation was made by Ron Sparks, Director of Governor Robert Bentley’s Alabama Rural Development Office, to the KidCheck State Steering Committee in support of moving KidCheck to Sight Savers America. The KidCheck State Steering Committee voted unanimously in favor of the move. The Alabama Rural Development Office will now become a strategic partner with the Sight Savers America KidCheck Program.

Ron Sparks, Director of the Alabama Rural Development Office, said “KidCheck is a highly successful program with strong support from local and state education leaders in Alabama. It is a program that is making a difference in our children’s lives and merging it with a highly successful nonprofit provides limitless opportunities to attract the funding needed to make KidCheck a national model for improving the delivery of children’s healthcare. I am extremely impressed by the work of Sight Savers America in making our state a model for providing children’s vision follow-up care and I look forward to working together to take KidCheck to new levels.”

KidCheck is a K-12 school-based health program that provides annual comprehensive health screenings for K-12 school children in participating Alabama school systems. 38 Alabama school systems have implemented KidCheck with most now making KidCheck part of their annual school year. By the end of this school year, approximately 80,000 Alabama children would have receiving KidCheck screenings during our first 3 years of the program. Children failing vision screenings are referred to Sight Savers for comprehensive vision follow-up care. Other necessary referrals are currently made by school nurses.

Jeff Haddox, President & CEO of Sight Savers America, said “KidCheck is an excellent fit for Sight Savers America as we continue to expand our services to meet the needs of children in Alabama and beyond. We will build on the success of KidCheck to continue to expand the

program across Alabama and to utilize wireless technology to further develop follow-up components that will allow us to best measure our impact.”

In 2009, the Alabama KidCheck Program was named the Most Innovative State/Regional Program in Alabama by the AUM Center for Government. The Business Council of Alabama has identified KidCheck as an example of a measurable program that should be supported as a way of containing long-term healthcare costs in our state.

Sight Savers is a Birmingham based non-profit children’s vision health organization, doing business in eight states and serving more than 35,000 children each year, including those who are low vision and blind. Sight Savers coordinates all necessary follow-up eye care services from the State Vision Program that screens every K, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade public school student in Alabama along with 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the Black Belt. Sight Savers’ unique case management protocol ensures that no child will pass through any of Alabama’s public school systems without the opportunity to receive the eye care necessary to succeed in school and in life. Qualifying children receive free follow-up eye care treatment including eye glasses, vision aids, and even necessary eye surgery.

KidCheck was created based on model health screening programs in the Bibb and Blount County School Systems. The Alabama Power Foundation and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama have been state supporters of KidCheck since its inception.

For more information on the Sight Savers America KidCheck Department, please contact Chad Nichols, Director of KidCheck and Director of Government and Community Relations for Sight Savers, by emailing [cnichols@sightsaversamerica.org](mailto:cnichols@sightsaversamerica.org) or dialing (205) 991-4885. For more information on Sight Savers America, please visit [www.sightsaversamerica.org](http://www.sightsaversamerica.org).