



Free eye testing set on Molokai

Retina screenings at three sites; no appointment needed
October 7, 2009

The Project Vision Bus will roll through Molokai from Tuesday through Oct. 15 offering free retina screenings to residents.

The bus, whose visit is sponsored by the Molokai Lions Club, will visit Kilohana Recreation Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday; Kualapuu Recreation Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 14; and Home Pumehana in Kaunakakai from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 15.

No appointments are necessary, and people will be treated on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Project Vision Bus is a mobile screening unit equipped with state-of-the-art digital imaging equipment that takes high-quality photos of the inside of the eye in a matter of minutes, without the need for medication or pupil dilation.

The unit is staffed by both paid medical personnel and trained volunteer Lions. The entire process takes about 10 minutes. An ophthalmologist reviews images, and results are sent to each participant as well as to a local eye doctor upon request. Referrals to local specialists also may be facilitated.

Retinal disease has a devastating impact on vision and is often a result of delayed diagnosis, the Retina Institute of Hawaii Web site said. In many cases, damage and permanent vision loss may be prevented through early detection and treatment.

Dr. Michael D. Bennett, president of the Retina Institute of Hawaii, founded and funded the nonprofit Project Vision, which takes mobile units to underserved populations. Molokai has only one hospital and four clinics, and Ohana Eye Center flies in from Oahu twice a month. None of the medical facilities provides retina screening, which can cost \$200.

The Molokai Lions Club is covering expenses for travel, accommodations and wages for the retina technicians. Young Brothers helped ship over the Oahu-based Project Vision Bus for free. The Molokai visit also had the support of the American Diabetes Association.

Molokai Lions Club President Ron Davis, a former Maui fire captain and state representative, will drive the bus.

Lions are known for their commitment to being "Knights of the Blind in the crusade against darkness," a challenging statement made by Helen Keller in 1925. For more information, contact Jackie Cushman at (808) 553-5006.