

## CDC: Low-income southerners at highest risk of vision loss

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(HealthDay)—New U.S. government research connects severe vision loss with poverty, and reveals that people in the southern part of the country have the highest prevalence of both poverty and severe vision loss. The findings were published in the May 22 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

The new report used responses from the 2009 through 2013 American Community Survey, which included about 250,000 American households.

Overall, 3.1 percent of those surveyed said they had severe vision loss. Of the 437 counties that had the highest rates of severe vision loss and

poverty, 83.1 percent were in the South, followed by 9.1 percent in the West and 7.8 percent in the Midwest. None of the counties was in the Northeast, the researchers found. In Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, at least 6 percent of the counties were in the top 25 percent group for both severe vision loss and [poverty](#).

"Regular eye examinations and awareness of [risk factors](#) associated with vision loss need to be promoted, especially among local communities in the South," Jinan Saaddine, M.D., M.P.H., team leader of the Vision Health Initiative in the Division of Diabetes Translation at the CDC, told *HealthDay*. "Further investigations are needed to better understand the social and geographic disparities in vision loss, how to minimize risk factors associated with [vision loss](#), and how to improve access and use of eye care services at the county and local levels, especially in the South."

**More information:** [Full Text](#)

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