

BIRMINGHAM-Congressman Spencer Bachus visited UAB today and saw first hand the screening process for Glaucoma and Diabetes that will be administered in the Rural Alabama Diabetes and Glaucoma Initiative. “This is part of an effort to bring better eye care to the state of Alabama, especially the Black Belt, where residents are most at risk for Glaucoma and Diabetes which are leading causes of blindness”, explained Congressman Bachus.

The Rural Alabama Diabetes and Glaucoma Initiative will send a team of eye care professionals throughout the Black Belt in a mobile screening unit offering free glaucoma and diabetes screenings. According to Congressman Bachus, “The medical professionals participating in this effort are unsung heroes, and I applaud their efforts.”

African Americans are seven times more likely to have diabetes and five times more likely

to have glaucoma than whites. Vision loss from diabetes and glaucoma are irreversible. “It is a tragedy that 80 percent of those who lose their sight could have avoided by early detection and treatment”, Congressman Bachus said. “In Congress, I am seeking support to expand UAB’s initiative so more of our citizens can be treated before it is too late.”

The knowledge gained by doctors traveling throughout the Black Belt will have a long-lasting impact on further understanding the progression, treatment, and prevention of these diseases. Gallup

polls in the last three decades show that the disability Americans fear most, after mental incapacity, is blindness. “The Rural Alabama Diabetes and Glaucoma Initiative holds promise not only for those in the Black Belt but everywhere”, Congressman Bachus said.