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For Immediate Release

ONELEGACY EYE BANK IN LOS ANGELES RECEIVES ACCREDITATION FROM THE EYE BANK ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (EBAA)

Greater Los Angeles Non-Profit To Serve Ocular Needs

LOS ANGELES, Calif., July 7, 2014 –The OneLegacy Eye Bank, a program of OneLegacy, the organ, eye and tissue recovery agency serving the seven county greater Los Angeles area, has received accreditation for recovery, evaluation, storage and distribution of corneas from the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA), the nationally-recognized accrediting body for ocular processes. The accreditation was officially announced during the 53rd EBAA Annual Meeting held recently in Portland, enhances OneLegacy’s previous EBAA eye recovery accreditation and supplements its organ and tissue accreditations from the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations and the American Association of Tissue Banks.

“For thousands of people blinded by corneal disease, the miracle of sight is restored every year through corneal transplant surgery. There are few acts more noble than the gift of organ, eye and tissue donation,” stated Chris Blanton, MD, OneLegacy’s Eye Bank Medical Director. “OneLegacy’s well-deserved accreditation is welcome news, for it will only enhance access to sight restoration.”

According to Gonzalo Lazarte, MD and Program Manager of OneLegacy’s Eye Bank and a 17-year veteran of the eye and tissue banking industry, “OneLegacy established the Eye Bank to ensure that corneas from selfless eye donors are transplanted to enhance or restore sight in our local communities and beyond.”

OneLegacy has recovered corneas from donors for the past three decades, with 15,000 recovered for transplantation over the past 10 years. The new accreditation means that OneLegacy can now directly provide corneas to eye transplant surgeons wherever there is a need.

Located in downtown Los Angeles, OneLegacy’s Eye Bank is an FDA-registered site where evaluation of the cornea and eligibility determination is conducted. The Eye Bank is supported by OneLegacy’s Family Care Center (open 24 hours a day) and more than 40 surgical recovery technicians and referral personnel who collaborate with over 200 hospitals and seven county sheriff-coroner medical examiner offices. **Media tours of the facilities are available upon request.**

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The Eye Bank's accreditation was obtained after a rigorous process consisting of creation and review of policies and procedures, competency assessment of staff, demonstration of technical skills, validation of processes, and comprehensive staff interviews to ensure compliance with EBAA standards.

According to the EBAA, more than 45,000 corneal transplants are performed in the U.S. every year. Because there is no need to match blood types, anyone can be an eye donor; neither age nor quality of eye sight nor eye color matters. Aside from those suffering from infections or a few highly communicable diseases, most people are medically suitable donors.

In California, residents can register to become organ, eye and tissue donor at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or signing up online at www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org or www.doneVIDAcalifornia.org.

OneLegacy is the non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives through organ, eye and tissue donation in seven counties in Southern California: Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Kern. Serving more than 200 hospitals, 11 transplant centers and a diverse population of nearly 20 million, OneLegacy is the largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization in the world. For more information, call OneLegacy at (800) 786-4077 or visit www.onelegacy.org.

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