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OneLegacy and San Diego Eye Bank Partner to Boost Local Vision

Southern California Ophthalmologists Now Have Greater Access to California Corneas

Los Angeles and San Diego, CA – The partnership between OneLegacy, the largest organ procurement organization in the U.S., and the San Diego Eye Bank, the largest full-service eye bank in California, means Greater Los Angeles area ophthalmologists in need of tissue to restore sight to their patients now have access to more high-quality, local corneal tissue than ever before.

“The fact that the Greater Los Angeles region has not had a full-service eye bank for a number of years will no longer be a reason for surgeons to import corneal tissue into California,” said Prasad Garimella, Chief Operating Officer of OneLegacy. “Through our unique partnership with the San Diego Eye Bank, we are able to serve all hospitals and eye surgeons in Southern California.”

As OneLegacy’s exclusive distributor of donated corneal tissue, the San Diego Eye Bank will help ensure that *local* ophthalmologists and their patients have access to the highest quality ocular tissue for transplant from generous *local* donors. The Southern California counties of Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Kern will benefit directly from this collaboration. Corneal tissue will first be distributed in Southern California. When all local needs for transplants are fulfilled, the San Diego Eye Bank will distribute tissue nationally, then internationally.

“Studies suggest that eye tissue recovered and distributed locally plays a key role in achieving higher success rates and better outcomes,” said Jeffrey Penta, Executive Director of the San Diego Eye Bank. “Our partnership brings sight-saving benefits to Southern Californians. Now more than ever, hospitals and practitioners in Los Angeles and the surrounding communities have a local, state-of-the-art facility for acquiring donated corneal tissue.”

OneLegacy and the San Diego Eye Bank have worked together for many years, and the early stages of the partnership were instrumental in helping OneLegacy get its eye bank fully functional. With the San Diego Eye Bank’s help, OneLegacy established a high-quality cornea processing facility under the direction of physicians and staff with hundreds of years of eye banking experience. The OneLegacy Eye Bank, a program of OneLegacy Organ Procurement Organization, received accreditation from the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) in the spring of 2014.

“Today’s announcement marks the natural evolution of our partnership with the San Diego Eye Bank,” Garimella said. “More importantly, this continued collaboration and OneLegacy’s new status as a full-service eye bank means stronger outcomes for our communities.”

Thanks to the partnership, OneLegacy is on track for a record year providing corneas for transplants. Outreach will emphasize access to California Corneas™ and that the organizations are Dedicated to SoCal™.

“We could not be more proud to partner with an OPO like OneLegacy,” added Penta. “The service area that OneLegacy covers, combined with the long-term relationships in ophthalmology and eye banking that the San Diego Eye Bank has cultivated, will advance the shared mission of restoring sight to the local Southern California community and the entire Golden State.”

About OneLegacy

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.

About San Diego Eye Bank

The San Diego Eye Bank, a non-profit organization, is California’s largest eye bank and the home of the International Cornea Project. As the premier full service eye bank, the San Diego Eye Bank has been proudly serving physicians and helping patients worldwide since 1960. For more information, call San Diego Eye Bank at (800) EYE-BANK or visit www.sdeb.org.

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