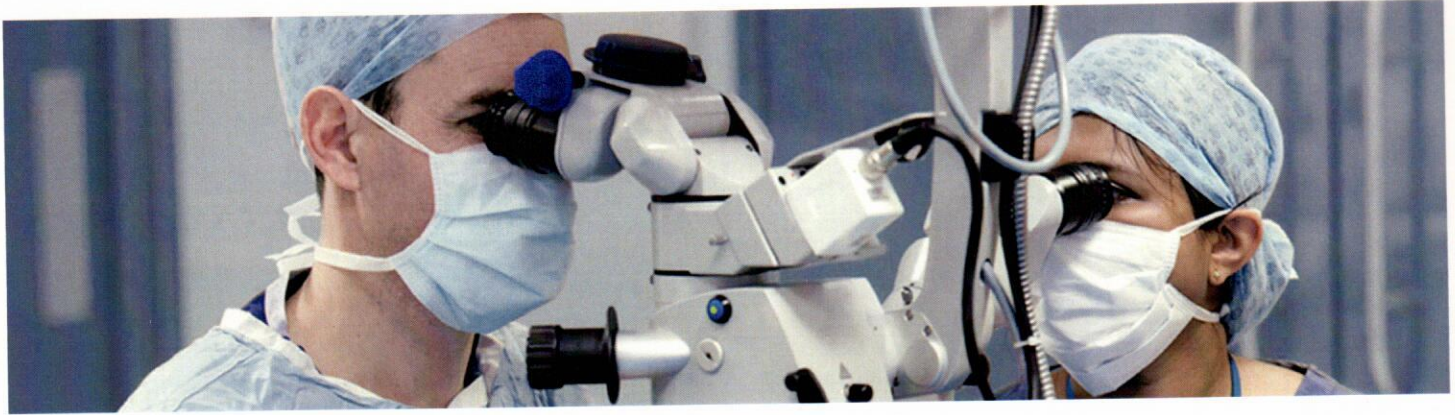


Vision Share Comes to the Northwest



Events happen fast in eye banking--corneal tissue is donated, procured, evaluated, processed, preserved, matched, delivered, and transplanted in as little as a day. Into this process go years of work--not only by the surgeons carrying out sight-saving procedures, but also by eye banking leaders who have built a reliable, efficient system to speed corneal tissue from procurement to placement all over the world, every day.

The largest of these eye bank networks is the non-profit, Vision Share, which offers eye tissue, eye banking expertise, education, and industry leadership in the US and abroad.

The organization is entering a time of industry-driven expansion. A growing staff, including a brand new presence in the Northwest region, is joined by its new president and CEO, Philip Waitzman, MBA, MPH, MA, who is working to expand capabilities to make "positive, meaningful impact in the ophthalmic community, focused on maintaining the integrity of the industry."

BUILDING A NETWORK

The organization has worked to build the largest network of non-profit eye banks in the world, with 13 members and 20 eye banks in the US and a vast network of providers at home and abroad. Member organizations provide the expertise in recovery and preparation, while the organization offers an easy- to-use distribution network.

Together, the network and its members are able to meet local, national, and international eye tissue needs. The organization's eye banks provide more than one-half the supply of donor corneas in the United States with more than 20,000 placements in 2016.

EXPANDING GLOBALLY

Because the US has more donor tissue than it requires for procedures, the organization's network reaches out to coordinate with domestic and international eye banks and surgeons to distribute donor corneas around the world. The non-profit's efforts to raise transplant awareness and ophthalmic clinical competencies through collaboration with industry partners extend globally as well.

For the patients of Prof. Mohammed Belmekki, ophthalmologist at the Cheikh Zaid Hospital, Rabat, Morocco, the organization's international outreach has made a marked improvement.

"In the past, my patients who needed corneal transplant surgery faced long waits of 6 to 12 months as we worked to obtain the necessary tissue," Dr. Belmekki said.

"Since I began working with Vision Share last August, we have reduced that wait to under 4 months, and we have fewer patients on the waiting list," he said. "We hope to reach a 1-month delay."

SUPPLYING QUALITY

To lead the world of eye banking, an organization must understand the clinical and practical needs of surgeons, even as procedures and techniques continually advance. Its goal is to provide transplant-ready tissue for all clinical procedures that require it. Doing so requires a team of professionals talented in eye tissue recovery, preparation, distribution, and placement.

The team offers surgeons tissue from donors of various ages, at a range of thicknesses to meet their surgical needs. All of the tissue offered by the organization are expertly processed and prepared for surgery.

Advancing Education

As corneal transplant procedures evolve, surgeons need to learn new skills and techniques. It is part of the non-profit's mission to play a role in improving transplant awareness and ophthalmic clinical competencies and participates in research studies.

The organization collaborates with industry partners to make information and education readily available through wet labs, training demonstrations, and continuing medication education.

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