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BEST-IN-CLASS EYE SURGERY

From left to right: Kyle A. Bohannon, President and CEO; Lothaire Bluth, MD; Scott Perkins, MD and Andrew Rabinowitz, MD

Arizona is now home to the top eye surgery company in the nation and it's all about you. Barnet Dulaney Perkins Eye Center and Southwestern Eye Center have joined forces to create the "best-in-class" eye surgery experience. For more than 30 years, each company operated with the goal of creating the top eye surgery centers in the world. By forming American Vision Partners, the two brands have partnered to provide patients and local Doctor of Optometry partners with exactly that. New technology will provide patients with the highest quality experience and medical results in eye care. More locations and top-tier ophthalmic surgeons means even more personal care, less travel, reduced wait times and less paperwork to get the best eye care in the nation. New President and CEO, Kyle A. Bohannon says he joined the organization to create a "center of excellence," a place where patients can get exactly what they need more quickly, in the most efficient manner, with the best overall patient experience and results.

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ADVANCES AND INNOVATIONS OFFER A CLEAR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF EYE CARE

Degenerating eyesight is an unfortunate part of many of our lives. In fact, many of you who are reading this are probably doing so while wearing eyeglasses or contacts - or squinting while fighting off a similar inevitable fate. You're hardly alone in your optical obfuscation though, as according to the Vision Council of America, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of all adults use some sort of vision correction. Fortunately, 80 percent of vision problems are avoidable or even curable and thanks to recent advances and innovations in eye care, more people will enjoy improved vision than thought possible.

NEAR FUTURE

A primary area of concern for optometrists is myopia, better known as nearsightedness, which has reached a worldwide epidemic. There are two leading causes for this condition, which is when we can clearly see items up close but objects at a distance are blurry. One factor is our relationship with sunlight and its effect on the health of our eyes. The other is the electronic devices we're using, which emit a blue light that is detrimental to retinal cells.

"Kids are becoming more nearsighted, and at earlier ages because their eyes are focused up close on these devices most often," said Dr. Stuart Bark, an optometrist at Family Eye-care of Scottsdale who specializes in contact lenses. "We don't know what will happen down the road and if there will be problems with retinal tissue and eye development."

A recent option for reducing nearsightedness or keeping it from getting worse is cornea reshaping therapy, which are overnight contact lenses that address myopia. Kids wear the

lenses at night, take them out in the morning and then can go all day without wearing glasses. The lenses have the same temporary effect as LASIK, but serve as an alternative for kids since patients must be 18 or older to qualify for the procedure.

"I have kids as patients and their parents don't want them wearing glasses too early, so we put these contacts on and impede or slow down the progression of myopia," Bark said. "It works very well most of the time."

Additional research is being conducted to prevent or slow down nearsightedness and keep kids from needing to wear thicker glasses at a younger age. Also helping in this area are improved treatments, better eye-glass design - especially on soft, bi-focal lenses - and encouraging prevention by emphasizing the importance of people cutting down the amount of time they are spending in front of these devices.

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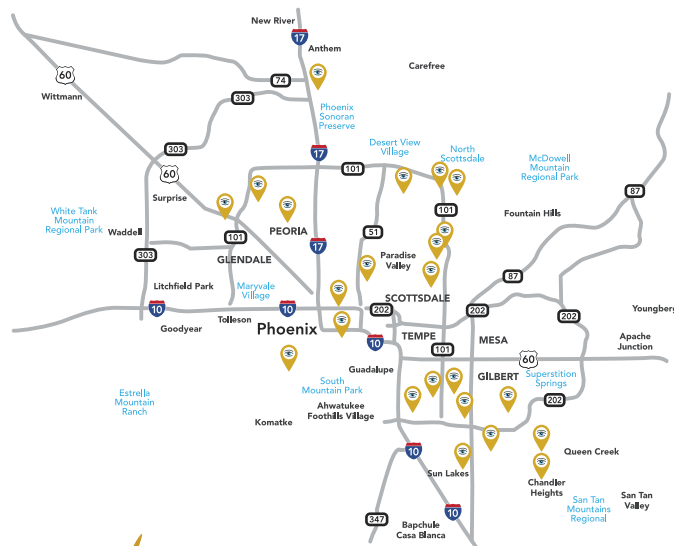
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**OUR MISSION IS SIMPLE:
WE HELP PEOPLE SEE.**

ATTACKING AGE-RELATED AILMENTS

Advances in eye care aren't only providing a brighter future for our younger population. There are also revolutionary ways to treat vision problems in adults too, which will impact many people considering of the more than 45 million people in the U.S., who wear contact lenses, more than 90 percent are adults.

The leading cause of vision loss in people over age 60 is age-related macular degeneration (AMD). There are two types of AMD, wet and dry. Wet AMD is less common but more aggressive in its progression to severe central vision loss, which impact functions such as driving and reading. Dry AMD is more common and is more slowly progressive in causing vision loss.

Wet AMD occurs when abnormal blood vessels grow into the macular portion of the retina. These new blood vessels tend to be very fragile and often leak blood and fluid. Dry AMD results in vision loss due to geographic atrophy without the development of new blood vessels with blood or fluid leakage.

AMD is being attacked from many directions, including the development of new drugs, long-term drug delivery systems, gene therapy and stem cell therapy. The new drugs under development are looking at halting the leaking and bleeding associated with wet AMD in addition to newer treatment modalities looking at curbing growth of areas of geographic atrophy associated with dry AMD.

New long-acting drug delivery platforms are seeking to deliver the same positive results while reducing the number of patient visits. Currently, a patient receives initial monthly injections, with treatments often continuing for several years. Associated Retina Consultants is involved in a nationwide clinical trial looking at a slow-release

port delivery system that could extend those visits to once every three months, six months or maybe longer.

"The wave of the future for the retina is looking at ways to change the need for monthly treatment injections, which are now a huge burden to our health system," said Dr. Alan Gordon, specialist in vitreoretinal diseases and surgery with Associated Retina Consultants. "We are very excited about new sustained-release delivery systems that would decrease the burden on the number of patient visits, improve patient compliance and potentially reduce health care costs."

Another area that holds great promise for treating different forms of blindness is gene therapy. Clinical trials, such as those focusing on the RPE65 gene, are looking to use intraocular injections to reactivate cells that have been lost and treat eye conditions such as retinitis pigmentosa and Leber's congenital amaurosis. This is the first gene therapy for any human genetic eye disease.

Further down the road, stem-cell therapy could also be used to treat other eye diseases, including dry AMD. While some forms of stem-cell research face ethical issues by using embryonal cells, newer treatments utilize skin cells from the patient to promote new areas of growth that may reactivate dormant photoreceptors and bring back lost vision.

"Gene and cell-based therapies may provide us with the biggest developments in retinal treatments in the coming years," said Dr. Gordon. "We are revolutionizing ways to treat patients that we didn't have before and that is exciting."



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ON THE HORIZON

Another interesting future advance that is currently under FDA testing, is using contact lenses with an embedded chip to monitor blood sugar levels in your tears. "That's the next step of medical technology where certain body functions can be monitored with contact lenses," Dr. Bark said.

Advances also keep developing with new instrumentation, machines and visualization that makes treating and diagnosing patients more efficient. 3D microscoping surgeries and intraoperative imaging of the retina in real time during surgery are procedures surgeons couldn't do even just a few years ago. New technology is also enabling surgeons to per-

form procedures while making a smaller incision where the patient no longer needs sutures. As a result, 1-hour surgery times have dropped to 15 minutes meaning the patients get better outcomes and quicker recovery.

There's a lot to look forward to when it comes to the future of eye care. With technological advances, medical breakthroughs and various therapies providing hope to patients with vision impairments, what was once considered a de facto life of wearing eyeglasses, contacts, or worse, outright blindness, now carries the hope of treating and curing more vision problems than ever before.



Welcome to World Class Retinal Care

Retinal Consultants of Arizona was established in 1980 in Phoenix and has grown to serve patients in more than 35 locations throughout the state. We provide the highest quality, personalized patient care with the latest medical technologies available. We are proud to have become Arizona's most experienced ophthalmology practice focused specifically on the diagnosis and management of the retina, macula and vitreous. Our physicians are the finest in their field. Through our compassionate care approach, we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to treat and manage your specific retinal condition. We are here to help you maintain your vision, your independence and best possible eye health.

The  **Retinal Research Institute** – managed by Retinal Consultants of Arizona – is the nation's leading retina-specific clinical trial and research facility. We are continuously involved in multiple clinical research trials and studies to introduce and expand the most advanced treatment options. In many cases, global innovations and cutting-edge technologies in retina treatment options are studied and researched at our institute, giving our patients access to the most advanced technologies to save and maintain their vision.



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