

## **FOR VISION CORRECTION WHEN LIVES ARE ON THE LINE, EMERGENCY FIRST RESPONDERS TURN TO LASIK**

### **Laser Vision Correction Eliminates the Problems With Eyeglasses or Contact Lenses When Conditions are Difficult, Lives are on the Line and Seconds Count**

**WESTBURY, NY, July 17, 2012** – For emergency first responders – police officers, firefighters, paramedics, the military, and emergency medical technicians – good eyesight can be a matter of life and death.

But because of the harsh and unpredictable working conditions that first responders must confront, eyeglasses and contact lenses often aren't the right choice. For that reason, many first responders have turned to laser vision correction surgery, known as LASIK.

“For most people, eyeglasses and contact lenses are just an inconvenience,” says Eric D. Donnenfeld, M.D., F.A.C.S., founding partner of Ophthalmic Consultants of Long Island (OCLI) and member of the American Refractive Surgery Council, who has performed LASIK surgery on over a thousand first responders. “But for emergency personnel, eyeglasses and contacts can actually be a hazard. They can interfere with the ability to do the job safely and effectively.”

According to Dr. Donnenfeld, first responders face a variety of situations in which glasses or contacts can be a hindrance or even a hazard:

- Vigorous activity such as pursuing a suspect. A police officer in pursuit might have to run into underbrush or through challenging landscapes like junkyards where branches and debris can knock glasses askew or damage contacts. Even worse a first responder can lose his or her glasses during an altercation and have their lives and those they are protecting placed in jeopardy.
- Harsh environments such as fire scenes, where smoke, water and small foreign body debris can interfere and create discomfort with contact lenses. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration warns contact lens wearers to be careful with their contacts when at the beach or engaged in water sports. Conditions for firefighters are even more difficult.
- Routine physically demanding work such as lifting and moving patients, where eyeglasses and even contacts can be displaced. Sweating into contact lenses isn't dangerous but can be distracting, which is a problem for any worker and especially so when the work is critically important to someone's health or safety.

“For any first responder who struggles with glasses or contacts – or who wants to be assured of good vision at all times without having to deal with extra equipment – LASIK is worth considering,” Dr. Donnenfeld says. “LASIK is relied on by many first responders, and by many other people who work in difficult environments and who need the best possible eyesight at all

times.” The U.S. Air Force and Navy rely on LASIK for pilots and special operations personnel, and NASA has approved LASIK for our astronauts”

For first responders considering their vision correction options, the American Refractive Surgery Council offers a few insights:

- Laser Assisted In-Situ Keratomileusis (LASIK) uses laser technology to reshape the cornea to reduce or eliminate the visual irregularities that cause nearsightedness, farsightedness and/or astigmatism. Many patients see better after LASIK than with their glasses or contacts.
- LASIK is a safe and effective vision correction option. In fact, LASIK is safer than contact lenses. Clinical data reports that the risk of vision loss is much higher with contact lenses than LASIK.
- While today’s LASIK technology means more people than ever can take advantage of its vision correcting abilities, not everyone is a candidate. Approximately 20 percent of patients are not candidates for the procedure.
- Because it is an elective procedure, LASIK is a personal choice; one that should be thoroughly considered. Becoming an informed patient, carefully researching and selecting a highly qualified surgeon and understanding what LASIK can and cannot do are essential elements of a successful outcome.

“If your work is literally a matter of life and death, and if eyeglasses or contacts are hard for you to manage, LASIK is very much worth investigating,” said Dr. Donnenfeld. “Talk with your ophthalmologist about your options and find out if you are one of the millions who can benefit from vision correction with LASIK.”

***For more information, or to schedule an interview or bylined article, contact Liana Miller of Engaged Communication at 949-276-8920 or [liana@engagedcommunication.net](mailto:liana@engagedcommunication.net)***

***About Dr. Eric D. Donnenfeld, M.D., F.A.C.S.***

Dr. Donnenfeld, a member of the American Refractive Surgery Council, is recognized as one of the leading refractive surgeons in the United States. As one of the original investigators of the excimer laser, he has performed more than 50,000 laser vision corrective surgical procedures. Dr. Donnenfeld has served as president of many professional societies including the Nassau Surgical Society, cornea section of ASCRS, the Ophthalmology Division of the Nassau Academy of Medicine, and the International Ocular Microbiology and Immunology Group. He is on the executive board of ASCRS and is the chief editor of *Cataract and Refractive Surgery Today*. He has written over 170 papers on cornea, external disease, cataract and refractive surgery, and 20 book chapters and books. He is on the editorial board of nine journals and has participated in over 40 FDA studies. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and has received its Honor Award, Senior Honor Award and Secretariat Award.