



East Florida Eye Institute

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 12, 2009

Clinical Trial Offers Latest Treatment and FREE Care to Macular Degeneration Patients

STUART, FL (February 12, 2009) -- Treasure Coast patients with Wet Macular Degeneration have an exciting new treatment option now available to them. Ronald Frenkel, MD, FACS, in Stuart is one of the most experienced doctors in the State of Florida in using VEGF Trap. Dr. Frenkel, Principal Investigator in the Regeneron sponsored endeavor has openings for patients in the latest phase of the trial, which is available in Stuart only at the East Florida Eye Institute (www.efei.com). He works with two other retinal specialists at the Institute in using VEGF Trap.

In late 2006, Roberta Davidson, a retired Senior Citizen Advisor for AAA, had been noticing that it was becoming difficult to watch television. She was diagnosed with Wet Macular Degeneration and it was revealed that Roberta did not have vision good enough to drive in her left eye. Roberta lives part year in Stuart. Her daughter researched the disease on the internet and contacted Ronald Frenkel, MD, the only VEGF Trap Investigator on the Treasure Coast to see if he could help her mother.

She participated in the Phase II VEGF Trap trial at Dr Frenkel's Macular Degeneration Center at East Florida Eye Institute. "It was an easy decision—to have the chance to be treated with a medicine that could mean less injections than getting Lucentis monthly was great!" Roberta said. "I have gone as long as 6 months between treatments and only required 7 injections in over 24 months as compared to Lucentis which is given monthly", she stated. Her vision has maintained at nearly 20/20 for over 2 years. "Being able to have injections less often has been so much better for my lifestyle—I can go out of town or even leave the country and not worry about scheduling around my eye treatments", she said. "After the trial was completed, Regeneron created a follow up trial so I could keep getting VEGF Trap, all for free. It's wonderful, and I was so impressed with my results after my first treatment that I actually purchased stock in Regeneron!", said Davidson.

"Usually, a patient must rely on friends or family to drive them long distances to university clinics to receive the latest treatments. The availability of this trial here at the full time Macular Degeneration Center at the East Florida Eye Institute makes it so much more convenient for both the patient and their family", says Frenkel, who is also a

Voluntary Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Frenkel was also again rated a top macular degeneration doctor in Stuart/Port St. Lucie for 2009 by Castle Connelly national doctor rating service/Stuart Magazine.

Frenkel's exciting results along with those of his colleagues have been presented at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, May, 2008, at the Retina Society meeting in September, 2008, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting in November, 2008. Patients who get VEGF Trap may require far fewer injections than Lucentis patients, who may need treatment monthly. No patients in the trial receive placebo.

Macular Degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in older Americans in the U.S. today. It may make it difficult to read books, sign your checkbook, recognize faces, watch TV or drive your car. Symptoms of wet macular degeneration may include: straight lines appearing wavy, doorways seeming crooked, or a central blurry or blind spot. Newer treatments are now preventing vision loss and even improving vision in many patients!

Macular Degeneration can occur in 1 eye or both. "If a patient has wet Macular Degeneration in 1 eye, it's important to carefully monitor the other eye. That's because there's a 50% chance of developing it in the other eye within 5 years." Dr Frenkel said.

Trial participants receive treatment with either VEGF Trap or Lucentis. Examinations, testing, and drug treatment are all free to trial participants. Part-year residents who participate in the trial may be eligible to have their travel for visit appointments reimbursed through Regeneron.

For a free screening to see if you have Macular Degeneration, for more information, or to see if you may qualify for this trial, call East Florida Eye Institute, in Stuart at 772-287-9000.

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About East Florida Eye Institute

Ronald Frenkel, M.D. F.A.C.S. is a board Certified and Harvard fellowship trained ophthalmologist. Dr Frenkel is a Voluntary Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine. He has authored book chapters and over 50 peer reviewed publications and abstracts, and serves as a scientific reviewer for numerous ophthalmology journals. Dr Frenkel is an American Academy of Ophthalmology Achievement Award recipient and has been rated the Top Macular Degeneration and Glaucoma Doctor in Martin and St Lucie counties by Castle-Connolly for 2008 *and* 2009.

Richard Grodin, M.D. is a board certified and fellowship trained ophthalmologist. His practice focuses on disease of the retina. Dr Grodin serves as a Principal Investigator for several of the nation's leading retinal clinical trials.

Nhu Truong, O.D. is a board certified optometric physician. Dr Truong served on the faculty of Nova Southeastern University where she instructed optometric physician students in the ophthalmic clinical arts. At East Florida Eye Institute, she manages comprehensive ophthalmology patients and complex disease such as macular degeneration and glaucoma.

Shamim Haji, MD is a macular degeneration and glaucoma clinical fellow. In his capacity as a Clinical Research Fellow at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York he participated in numerous clinical trials which have led to FDA approved ophthalmic medications.