



## **PRESS RELEASE**

TO: Editor in Charge

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **First Step in Receiving Stellar Cataract Care is to Research and Select an Experienced and Knowledgeable Provider**

*Cataract Patients Should Look at a Number of Factors in Choosing their Doctor*

*(Honolulu, Hawaii)*, June 18, 2008 – Every year in the United States there are 1.5 million cataract surgeries performed. With over 60% of the American population over the age of 60 a cataract patient, it is not surprising that removing a cataract through surgery is one of the most common medical procedures performed. However, for those patients who have been told they will need cataract surgery, the very idea of surgery can still be quite daunting and intimidating. Careful research and a reference point of what to look for in a provider prior to undergoing cataract correction can help put a patient's mind at ease so they know they are receiving the best care available.

The most important factor in selecting a doctor to perform a cataract surgery should always be experience and results. A good cataract surgeon should perform a high enough number of cataract surgeries each month so that he or she maintains their professional skills. A good benchmark to use when judging a surgeon's experience is that they complete at least 20-30 cataract removals each month.

In addition, patients should question their prospective doctors on the results that the majority of their surgery patients have received. A doctor who performs a high number of surgeries per month, but has only a small percentage of patients reporting improved vision following the surgery is probably not the doctor to perform the cataract removal. Most experienced surgeons should not only be able to answer right away approximately how many of their patients see better post-operation, but the ratio should be quite high.

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“The surgeons, nurses and staff here at the Hawaiian Eye Center take great pride in our experience and ability to help restore patients’ vision after cataract surgery,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, Medical Director at the Hawaiian Eye Center. “We typically perform about 50 cataract surgeries per month and 97% or more see improvement in their vision following their recovery.”

Another factor patients should look at is the facility in which the cataract removal will be performed. Generally there are three types of facilities where a cataract procedure can take place. The first is a traditional hospital setting, the second an outpatient facility, usually associated with a hospital, designed so that surgery patients can come in, receive their treatment and then leave all in the same day, and the third is known as an ambulatory surgery center.

Typically with an ambulatory surgery center, such as the one found in Wahiawa at the Hawaiian Eye Center, patients will find a safe environment with a more relaxed atmosphere as the center is located next door to the doctor’s office instead of a larger more comprehensive medical facility. At an ambulatory surgery center patients are able to keep their street clothes on and are also treated by the staff they see during their normal office visits. For many patients this can be comforting and reassuring. Whatever facility the patient picks, however, it should always be Medicare accredited.

Other questions to consider when interviewing cataract surgeons include the provider’s philosophy on care and additional services such as transportation. There is no right or wrong outlook on cataract care, but patients should always be comfortable with their doctor prior to allowing them to complete any major operation. If the patient and the doctor are not compatible it may just mean the patient needs to keep looking for someone who can provide the type of surgical experience they envision.

Some facilities can provide their patients with transportation to and from the surgery site.

These and other similar benefits that a provider offers may not be essential to cataract

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removal care, but they certainly can be a helpful offer for the patient whose children work during the day or who has other like circumstances.

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Patients should also always check the doctor's medical background and certification. Almost 100% of physicians have degrees from respected medical schools and carry the proper certification from their professional boards, but it is always good to check and be completely positive these items are in order.

"It is so important that all patients take the time to do their research before committing to cataract surgery," Dr. Tortora said. "The patient who feels comfortable with his doctor and knows he or she is receiving top-notch care is more likely to have a successful surgery and recovery period and improved vision, which is of course, our number one goal."

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of "The Hawaiian Eye Show," a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 where "*life has never looked better.*"

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