

**Vision-Restoring Corneal Transplants Performed in 2013  
Will Have a Lifetime Net Benefit of Nearly $6 Billion**

**Washington, DC– (October 8, 2013) –** Corneal transplants performed in the United States this year will result in nearly $6 billion in total net benefits over the lifetime of the recipients, according to a six-month study undertaken by the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA).

The study compared the medical cost of transplant procedures to the direct and indirect lifetime costs of the alternative – living with blindness or severe vision impairment. With a corneal transplant, an individual avoids the direct expenditures that come with vision loss, such as higher routine medical costs and long-term care costs, and the indirect costs of potential years of lost productivity to both the patients and their family caregivers.

Eye disorders are the fifth costliest to the U.S. economy after heart disease, cancer, emotional disorders and pulmonary conditions.

“Our association represents 80 eye banks, providing corneal tissue to over 60,000 recipients each year,” said Kevin Corcoran, President and CEO of the Eye Bank Association of America. “I’ve spoken personally with a number of cornea recipients and felt the impact of giving someone their vision back. Now we understand, in real numbers, the economic impact of our work. It’s all made possible through the generosity of donors and the care and dedication of EBAA member eye banks and corneal surgeons.”

EBAA commissioned the study to determine the economic impact of corneal transplants. Researchers used previous years’ transplant numbers and census data to estimate total corneal transplants for the full 2013 calendar year.

The cost-benefit analysis depicted in the table below reveals that the lifetime benefit of the procedure is overwhelmingly greater than the costs of the surgery.

**Lifetime Economic Cost-Benefit of Corneal Transplantation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age Group** | **Patients with a Corneal Transplant in 2013** | **Per-Capita Cost and Benefit** | | | | **Total Net Lifetime Benefit** |
| **Medical Cost of Transplant** | **Benefits: Direct Medical** | **Benefits: Indirect** | **Net Lifetime Benefit** |
| **0-17** | 362 | $19,200 | $27,000 | $233,000 | $241,000 | $87,240,000 |
| **18-39** | 2,466 | $18,900 | $40,000 | $219,000 | $240,000 | $591,840,000 |
| **40-64** | 9,125 | $15,900 | $63,000 | $218,000 | $265,000 | $2,418,125,000 |
| **65+** | 35,408 | $16,500 | $84,000 | $3,400 | $71,000 | $2,513,968,000 |
| **TOTAL** | 47,361 | $16,500 | $77,000 | $57,500 | $118,000 | $5,588,598,000 |

***Source: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Corneal Transplant, September 2013, The Lewin Group***

Since EBAA’s founding in 1961, more than one million men, women and children have received corneal transplants to restore vision and relieve pain from injury and disease to the eye. With a success rate greater than 95 percent, the one-hour procedure restores the patient’s sight and his or her quality of life. In fact, it’s one of the most common and least invasive transplant procedures. The EBAA study proves the value of the procedure and the economic benefit to the patient, family and society.

Corneal transplants also translate to direct federal and state government savings. This study assumed full retirement at age 65, so the net indirect cost savings is small for these patients, but the per-capita lifetime net medical benefits of $67,500 for patients age 65 or greater receiving corneal transplants in 2013 will save Medicare, Medicaid and patients a combined $2.4 billion.

For a full copy of the report, please contact EBAA at [info@restoresight.org](mailto:info@restoresight.org).

**About EBAA:** The Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA), established in 1961, is the oldest transplant association in the nation and champions the restoration of sight through corneal transplantation. Over 80 member eye banks operate in the United States, Canada and Asia. These eye banks made possible more than 70,000 sight-restoring corneal transplants in 2012 and the opportunity to perform more transplants is significant because virtually everyone is a universal donor. The function of corneal tissue is not dependent on blood type, age, strength of eyesight or the color of the eye. To learn more, visit [www.restoresight.org](http://www.restoresight.org)

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