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Global Ocular Organization Opens New Gainesville Office
Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research Welcomes Fifth Office in Florida

TAMPA, Fla. (July 7, 2015) – The Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research – one of the only combined eye bank and ocular research centers in the world – recently opened a Gainesville office. This location was established to expedite the cornea donation process and to advance ocular research in order to meet the needs of donor families, recipients, surgeons and researchers.

Previously, LEITR transplant coordinators from Tampa and Jacksonville shared recovery services from medical facilities in North Central Florida. Because every second counts from donor to lab, the Gainesville location will reduce precious time lost, thus dramatically improving advancements in transplantation and ocular research.

“We recognized the opportunity to better serve our partners in the North Central Florida service area. By opening Gainesville, we are able to maintain the high level of donated ocular tissue we are known for – ultimately helping more people regain sight,” said Jason Woody, president and CEO of LEITR. “This is one of the top medical communities and our new field office will assist us as we expand and introduce new collaborations for groundbreaking transplant and research opportunities.”

Prior to opening the office, LEITR had worked closely with various Gainesville medical leaders. LEITR currently has agreements with local hospitals, medical examiner offices and VA medical centers. Specifically, the organization has collaborated with the University of Florida on studies and partners with the District 8 Medical Examiner Office.

“Our staff works closely with the Lions Eye Institute and ensures that the decedents who have requested donation of corneas and eyes be performed as quickly as possible,” said Cathy Weldon of the District 8 Medical Examiner Office, which is based in Gainesville.

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“Being a small part in this extraordinary service is an honor and we look forward to our continued partnership with the Lions Eye Bank for many years to come.”

The LEITR Gainesville office also covers the Ocala and Tallahassee markets.

**About the Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research (LEITR)**

The Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research, Inc., (LEITR) is a nonprofit, charitable organization dedicated to the recovery, evaluation and distribution of eye tissue for transplantation, research and education. LEITR's Eye Bank, located in Tampa, Fla., is one of the only combined eye bank and ocular research center in the world. Since its inception, it has brought the “Gift of Sight” to more than 65,000 men, women and children worldwide. For more information, visit [www.lionseyeinstitute.org](http://www.lionseyeinstitute.org).

**About the District 8 Medical Examiner Office**

The District 8 Medical Examiner Office welcomes the new Gainesville Lions Eye Bank service to our area. The Medical Examiner Office covers seven counties. With a staff of nine people, the office serves Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy and Union counties. [http://district8me.com/](http://district8me.com/)

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