



Contact:

Erika Novak

Erika.Novak@sightlifesurgical.com

206-414-7146

Jeannette Sanchez

Jeannette.Jimenez@bcm.edu

713-798-2393

**SightLife Surgical joins forces with Lions Eye Bank of Texas
at Baylor College of Medicine**

*Groundbreaking partnership will increase surgeon access to corneal tissue
and innovation in sight restoration*

Seattle, WA (February 1, 2018) – SightLife Surgical, the world’s first cornea-focused company, announced today that it has entered a partnership with the Lions Eye Bank of Texas at Baylor College of Medicine (LEBT). This groundbreaking partnership will better serve the local community by allowing the Lions Eye Bank (LEBT) to continue to perform eye and cornea donation functions, expertise the organization has mastered over the last six decades, and allow SightLife Surgical to provide local surgeons and their patients more choices for cornea treatments.

“By working with SightLife Surgical and continuing to work with LifeGift, our federally designated Organ Procurement Organization, LEBT brings together three industry leaders, which will have an incredible impact on the cornea transplant community in our region,” said Samantha Colborn, executive director of LEBT. “Together, we are expanding the opportunities to give the gift of sight to more people in our region than ever before.”

In the partnership, SightLife Surgical will process and distribute corneal tissue recovered by LEBT. Through SightLife Surgical’s extensive network and the solid base LEBT has created, local surgeons will have access to a larger donor pool of tissue from which they can meet the specific needs of their patients. In addition, SightLife Surgical provides education and training opportunities and an expanding offering of innovative products and services tailored to corneal surgeons.

“SightLife Surgical is proud to have been invited to partner with LEBT. This relationship will help the local community and supports our mutual mission to eliminate corneal blindness worldwide by 2040,” said Monty Montoya, president and CEO of SightLife Surgical. “In 2017 alone, working with best-in-class eye banks and surgeons across the country allowed us to provide a record-breaking 14,274 corneas to those in need worldwide.”

“We are happy to have the opportunity to partner with SightLife Surgical in this endeavor,” said Dr. Tim Stout, chairman of the department of ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine. “We believe that we will be able to reach many more patients in need. This partnership is firmly committed to the elimination of corneal blindness, and I think this is a great step forward.”

The cornea is the clear part of the eye covering the iris and pupil; it lets light into the eye, permitting sight. Corneal blindness is a visual impairment that occurs when the cornea becomes clouded, scarred, or misshaped. This condition may be the result of injury, infection or diseases that cause corneal scarring, which can lead to functional blindness. A corneal transplant replaces the damaged tissue to restore sight. In the U.S., approximately 50,000 individuals receive corneal transplants each year.

“This new partnership is a win-win for our community,” said Dr. Sumitra Khandelwal, assistant professor of Ophthalmology at Baylor and medical director of LEBT. “Surgeons win as they can get all of their cornea



transplant services and products from the experienced Slightlife Surgical team. Meanwhile, Lions Eye Bank of Texas can focus on donor families and their needs as well the missions of Baylor College of Medicine: education, research and community service.”



About Lions Eye Bank of Texas at Baylor College of Medicine

The Lions Eye Bank of Texas at Baylor College of Medicine is a non profit organization located in Houston that serves the Texas Gulf Coast and other regions in southeast Texas. Founded in 1953 by Baylor and the [Lions Clubs of the Texas Gulf Coast](#), the Lions Eye Bank of Texas procures over 1,400 eye donations every year to meet the needs of surgeons along the Texas Gulf Coast.

<https://www.bcm.edu/eyebank>

About SightLife Surgical

Seattle-based SightLife Surgical is a socially driven company, seeking innovation and improvements in all dimensions of cornea care, well beyond traditional eye banking. SightLife Surgical supports corneal surgeons and their patients with a spectrum of services, including delivery of the highest quality tissue, the latest products and devices, surgeon education and advocacy for patient access and reimbursement policies. Through partnerships and acquisitions, the company invests in research and development of scalable therapeutics for the prevention and treatment of corneal blindness. SightLife Surgical is a subsidiary of SightLife, formed in 2016 to power a shared social mission to eliminate corneal blindness worldwide by 2040. www.sightlifesurgical.com

###