

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LORETTO HOSPITAL OPHTHALMOLOGIST PERFORMS FIRST DROPLESS CATARACT SURGERY IN ILLINOIS

The New Frontier in Cataract Surgery

CHICAGO, IL (September 22, 2014) – Loretto Hospital Ophthalmologist Dr. Mark J. Benjamin advanced to the frontline in cataract surgery by performing Loretto’s first dropleless cataract surgery on Tuesday, Sept. 16, making him the first doctor in Illinois to utilize the new dropleless cataract technology, according to Imprimis Pharmaceuticals, the San Diego, CA, company that formulated the medication.

“At Loretto Hospital, we recognize the importance of keeping our community healthy, not just when they are in our care but when they are discharged from the hospital. Having one of our own ophthalmologists utilize this new cutting edge cataract technology helps us ensure that Loretto is truly delivering better standards, better care and better outcomes to the communities we serve,” CEO and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sonia Mehta said.

The new dropleless technique has gained wide acceptance among ophthalmologists across the United States -- and a seemingly preferred method rather than conventional cataract surgery. On June 4, 2014, Imprimis published the results of a survey comprising 21 leading cataract surgeons. Of the 21 physicians surveyed, 95% preferred administering Imprimis’ single intraocular injection post cataract surgery.

Dr. Benjamin, who also prefers the use of Imprimis’ dropleless cataract injectable medication on patients, said he was motivated to do this surgery at Loretto because of its underprivileged patient population. “I believe our patients can benefit from this procedure because it is cost effective for them, while also ridding them of the bane of postoperative eye drops,” Dr. Benjamin said.

Without a doubt, technological advances surrounding cataract surgery has been astounding. The dropleless cataract surgery calls for a single injection of a compound formulation comprised of two potent antibiotics and an anti-inflammatory medication blend that is injected into the vitreous (a

jelly-like substance inside the eye), just near the retina literally seconds after the cataract surgery is performed.

The advantages of the innovative method includes: it is cost effective because it eliminates the need for prescription eye drops after surgery, refills and even co-payment required at the pharmacy; it eliminates compliance issues because it inoculates patients against possible infections; and the convenience is immense for doctors and office staff because it alleviates the time physicians have to spend instructing patients on how to properly use the eye drops.

Although dropless cataract surgery has been around since about 2005, the concept seemed to take off when Imprimis acquired intellectual property related to the ophthalmic compounded formulations in 2013. When the company launched its Go Dropless™ campaign in early 2014, the compound mixture used to perform dropless cataract surgery gained even more momentum. Imprimis' compound mixture is currently available in 38 states, including Illinois as of this past August. Dr. Benjamin was one of the first physicians to receive a supply.

LeaAnne Little, Midwest regional business director of Imprimis, educates physicians on how to use the new product. She recalls Dr. Benjamin's favorable acceptance of using the intraocular medications in lieu of post-operative drops. "The amount of calls that flood into a physician's office after cataract surgery is incredible, like a 95-year-old woman who can't put her drops in properly after surgery because her hands are too shaky, or a patient is having complications with using the postoperative drops because they just don't understand the instructions. This new technology really is the wave of the future. When Dr. Benjamin heard we were licensed to ship in Illinois, he wanted access to it right away."

A typical cataract surgical operation may involve pre-surgery drops, as well as several prescribed eye drops after cataract surgery to protect the eye against infection, decrease inflammation, and to keep the patient comfortable. Although cataract surgery is often covered by most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid; the real burden to patients is usually purchasing the prescribed drops before surgery and again afterwards, which usually runs patients anywhere from \$200 - \$400 for each vial. But the new dropless formula costs only \$20, does not require additional drops or refills; and the entire procedure – including the cataract surgery – only takes about 10 minutes.

"I really hope this becomes the standard of care going forward. It is very beneficial and more affordable for people who need cataract surgery and struggle with paying for the costs associated with their post-surgical care," Dr. Benjamin said.

For more information about dropless cataract surgery or cataract treatment options contact Loretto Hospital's Eye Clinic at 773-854-5306.

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About Loretto Hospital

Loretto Hospital is a not-for-profit, community-based, and acute care hospital located on the Far West Side of Chicago. Founded in 1939 by a group of community doctors to create a patient centered hospital that would serve the community regardless of a patient's ability to pay, Loretto has provided comprehensive medical care and social support services to the Austin Community for over 70 years. Although the largest percentage of the hospital's patients resides in Austin, neighboring communities and suburbs also utilize Loretto as a healthcare resource. For more information, please visit www.lorettohospital.org