DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
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IN REPLY REFER TO

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MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE EAST
COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE WEST
COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA
COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE SUPPORT COMMAND

SUBJECT: Policy Guidance on Laser-Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis (LASIK)

Reference: (a) NAVMED P-117, Manual of Medical Department
(b) NAMI Aeromedical Reference and Waiver Guide, Current Edition
(c) NAVADMIN 341/99 Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK) Surgery Program for Active Duty Service Members
(d) BUMED WASHINGTON DC 061344Z APR 00 Corneal Refractive Surgery Physical Standards and Waiver

This memorandum establishes Navy Medicine guidance regarding LASIK (laser-assisted *in situ* keratomileusis). It supersedes Navy Medicine Policy Memorandum 07-001 of 25 October 2006. LASIK is an acceptable surgical option for eligible Navy and Marine Corps personnel. This policy applies to active duty personnel, reservists, and new accessions.

Refractive Surgery and Service Members. Refractive surgery includes a variety of vision correcting procedures including LASIK and photorefractive keratectomy (PRK). The Navy's refractive surgery program has been shown to increase readiness, enhance performance and safety, and improve retention.

Although both LASIK and PRK are now available to active duty personnel, the primary advantage of LASIK over PRK is the significantly faster visual recovery and more rapid return to full duty. Based on extensive clinical trials, a wave front guided procedure is the preferred laser treatment modality for both LASIK and PRK.

Eligible Personnel. All active duty personnel are eligible for LASIK unless specifically excluded. To be considered for LASIK, the service member must:

1. Seek consultation with a military treatment facility eye care provider
2. Obtain written approval from his or her command
3. Provide informed consent to the refractive surgeon

Return to Undersea Warfare special duty will be in accordance with Chapter 15, Articles 15 - 102,105, and 106 of reference (a).

Excluded Personnel.
LASIK is considered disqualifying for all naval aviation personnel. Previously, a waiver could be recommended only for Class III personnel (aviation personnel who do not fly). Waiver may now be recommended for all active duty classes of aviation personnel, including those who fly, if

the standards in references (a) and (b) are met.

A history of LASIK in applicants for naval aviation training is considered disqualifying, but a waiver may be recommended provided the applicant meets the standards in references (a) and (b). When possible it is preferable, but not required, that the procedure be performed using a femtosecond laser for creation of the flap and a wave-front guided profile for the excimer laser ablation.

Active duty aviation personnel must receive their evaluation and procedure at a DoD refractive surgery center. Performance of the procedure by a "civilian" provider is not authorized.

Females who are pregnant, breast-feeding or intend to become pregnant within three months following the procedure are not eligible for LASIK. The refractive surgeon will make the final decision regarding eligibility and medical appropriateness.

The following is a list of specific conditions that disqualify one for LASIK:

- Concurrent topical or systemic medications that may impair healing, including corticosteroids, antimetabolites, isotretinoin (Accutane®), amiodarone hydrochloride (Cordarone®), and sumatriptan (Imitrex®)
- Medical conditions that may impair healing, including, but not limited to: collagen vascular disease, autoimmune disease, and immunodeficiency diseases
- Active ophthalmic disease or significant crystalline lens opacity
- Evidence of glaucoma
- Evidence of keratoconus, corneal irregularity, or abnormal videokeratography in either eye
- Known sensitivity or inappropriate responsiveness to any of the medications used in the postoperative care

Key Provisions of the Refractive Surgery Program

- Access to Care: Service members seeking LASIK or PRK shall use the forms and procedures described in reference (c) to request surgery and obtain command approval and prioritization.
- Prioritization of Treatment: With rare exception for the purpose of research at specified sites, all patients treated shall be active duty DoD personnel or reservists. Because the primary purposes of the program are readiness and performance enhancement, LASIK will usually not be offered to members who anticipate separation or retirement within the 12 months following surgery. In accordance with reference (d), prioritization of war fighters for surgery is the responsibility of line commanders.
- Reservists who are mobilized for extended periods of active duty may be eligible for LASIK, but must comply with all policies and procedures--including applicable wait times and the requirement to perform at least 12 months of active duty following surgery.

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