



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Avellino Donates \$25,000 to National Keratoconus Foundation to Support World Keratoconus Day and Disease Education

*1:375 are at-risk of developing keratoconus in certain ethnicities¹
Early detection critical to preserving sight for this 'silent' and often misdiagnosed disease
Avellino to host special World Keratoconus Day livestream event on November 10*

MENLO PARK, Calif. – (November 2, 2021) – Avellino Lab USA, Inc. (Avellino), in honor of World Keratoconus Day, today announced a \$25,000 donation to the National Keratoconus Foundation (NKCF) to support their educational efforts for this sight-threatening disease.

Part of the Gavin Herbert Eye Institute at the University of California, Irvine, NKCF is an outreach program and founder of World Keratoconus Day (November 10). With a database of more than 30,000 patients and care providers, it is also the world's oldest and largest keratoconus-focused organization with a mission to increase awareness and understanding of this genetic condition. It also supports scientific research into the cause and treatment of this significant corneal disease and Avellino's donation will directly support these educational and scientific efforts.

"On behalf of the NKCF, we want to express our great thanks and appreciation to Avellino for its generous donation," said NKCF Director Mary Prudden. "The more we can raise awareness of this disease that can lead to significant vision loss, the more we can change the disease trajectory, including with earlier detection. This can mean all the difference in preserving sight over a patient's lifetime."

Keratoconus is a genetic eye disease that changes the cornea, distorting the front of the eye into a cone shape. It can affect both eyes, and without treatment, vision can progressively deteriorate. Environmental triggers can also exacerbate the condition, including excessive and aggressive eye rubbing and inflammation from allergies or other irritants.

A 'silent' disease, it commonly progresses in the teen years, and symptoms can be misdiagnosed for years as other conditions, such as myopia. Vision lost during this time cannot be restored; however, when treatment starts early, such as in early adulthood, more sight can be preserved.

Avellino's AvaGen™, the first genetic test that helps determine a patient's risk of keratoconus and the presence of TGFBI corneal dystrophies, was made available nationwide this June. The test

examines 75 keratoconus-related genes and more than 2,000 variants of those genes to develop an actionable keratoconus genetic risk score.

The test helps identify patients at risk of developing keratoconus earlier than traditional diagnostic methods. When progression of keratoconus begins, their eye care professional can also recommend they, as appropriate, undergo FDA-approved cross-linking, which can halt disease progression and preserve vision.

AvaGen results can also influence an eye care professional's choice of refractive surgery options for patients who are suspect for keratoconus or have other topographical warning signs, especially in younger patients.

World Keratoconus Day Livestream Event

In addition to its donation, Avellino is hosting an educational livestream on World Keratoconus Day featuring several renowned ophthalmologists and optometrists.

The group will cover topics including the prevalence of keratoconus, disease diagnostics, and what patient types may benefit from genetic testing.

The event will take place on Wednesday, November 10 at 7:00 p.m. EST and will feature:

- **Mile Brujic**, O.D., FAAO, Owner of Premier Vision Group
- **Elizabeth Yeu**, M.D., Ophthalmologist at Virginia Eye Consultants; Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Eastern Virginia Medical School.
- **Terry Kim**, M.D., Professor of Ophthalmology, Duke University School of Medicine; Chief of the Cornea and External Division; and Director at Duke University Eye Center
- **Barry Eiden (moderator)**, OD, FAAO, FSLs, President and Medical Director North Suburban Vision Consultants, Ltd., and CEO of the International Keratoconus Academy of Eye Care Professionals
- **Mary Prudden**, NKCF Director
- **Joe Boyd**, Avellino Global Head of Sales and Marketing

Participants can register for the event [here](#) and click on the provided link to view the livestream.

About Avellino

Avellino Lab USA, Inc. is a global leader in gene therapy and molecular diagnostics at the forefront of precision medicine for eye care. With a long-term mission to develop personalized approaches to improve health and disease management through genomics, the company is developing a transformative genetic diagnostics product pipeline, as well as genetic therapeutics leveraging CRISPR gene editing, to better manage, and potentially cure, inherited diseases. The company also developed the Avellino SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR diagnostic test to aid in COVID-19 pandemic testing efforts in the US, and was the third private company in the US to receive EUA for its COVID-19 test. Avellino is headquartered in Silicon Valley, California, with operations in Korea, Japan, China and the UK.

To learn more about Avellino, visit www.avellino.com.

1. Wheeler, J.; Hauser, M. A.; Afshari, N. A.; Allingham, R. R.; Liu, Y., The Genetics of Keratoconus: A Review. Reproductive system & sexual disorders: Current Research 2012, (Suppl 6).

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