

heroes in focus

A GUIDE TO THE CORE EYE BANK



**DONATE
LIFE** **CORE**
Center for Organ Recovery & Education

WHO WE ARE

The Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE) is one of 57 federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organizations (OPOs) in the United States, serving more than five million people in western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Chemung County, New York.

CORE partners with the staff from more than 150 hospitals and health care facilities, as well as medical examiners and corneal transplant surgeons, to offer hope and a second chance at life to the thousands of people who are waiting nationwide for life-saving organ, healing tissue and sight-restoring corneal transplants.

CORE's Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA)-accredited eye bank provides donor eye tissue for vision-saving corneal transplants, medical education and research.

CORE is one of only four OPOs nationwide that is structured as a "complete OPO," meaning our facilities include an on-site eye bank at our Pittsburgh headquarters. CORE's campus also includes the state-of-the-art Broznick Surgical Pavilion, which features three operating rooms and two ICUs, allowing organ, tissue and cornea recovery to occur on-site. Having the eye bank and surgical recovery suites in one location means CORE is able to better medically manage each donor before recovery, and that donor eye tissue recoveries are performed under optimal conditions and by highly skilled staff. The result is a more efficient and, ultimately, more successful transplantation process.

In 2019, CORE won the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, a Presidential-level honor recognizing organizations with an unceasing drive for innovative solutions to complex challenges, visionary leadership and operational excellence. Only one of only five Pennsylvania organizations ever to achieve the Baldrige Award in its more than 30-year history, this award was the result of a near decade-long performance excellence journey – a journey that focused on the satisfaction of corneal transplant surgeons as a key group.

EBAA ACCREDITATION

EBAA Accreditation is the gold standard for eye banking. EBAA Accreditation is the only corneal tissue program recognized by the FDA and CDC, and EBAA medical standards are endorsed by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. It is the most thorough and comprehensive eye banking accreditations in the field. This distinction confirms that the CORE Eye Bank is of the highest quality and ensures the best patient outcomes. Continually accredited since our founding in 1977, CORE is certified through 2023.

To achieve this designation, CORE must meet strict criteria regarding:

- Staff qualifications and training
- Serology, infection disease testing and sterilization
- Processing and storage equipment
- Quality assurance procedures
- Tissue distribution records
- Handling and preparation processes

mission

To Save and Heal
lives through
donation.

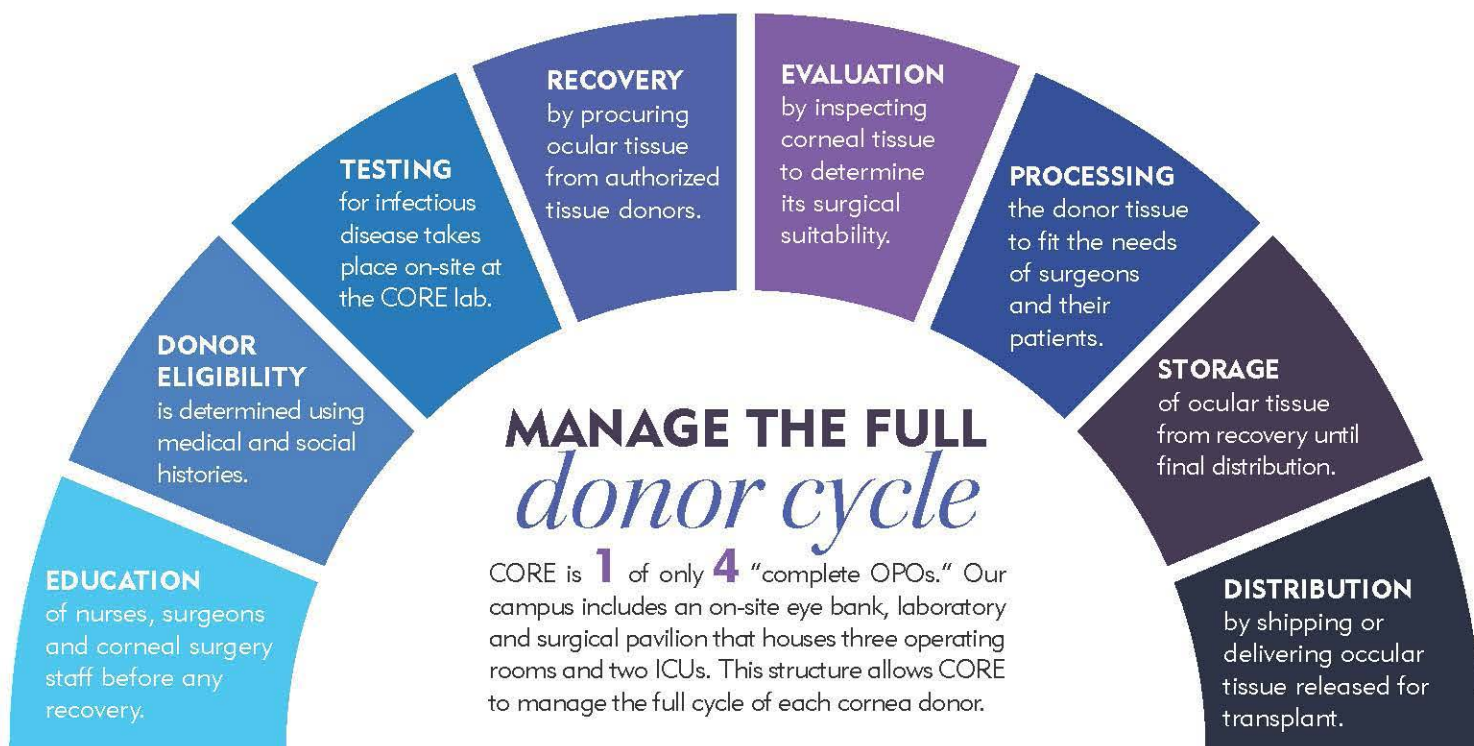
vision

Every potential
donor will make
A Pledge for Life.

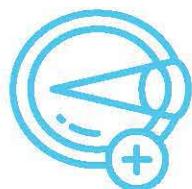
values

Compassion
Education
Innovation
Integrity
Life
Quality
Respect
Responsiveness

WHAT WE DO



PROCESSING



DMEK
DSAEK
DALK
PK

OCULAR TISSUE



DMEK (pre-load, pre-punch)
DSAEK (ultra-thin option)
Full Thickness
Patch Graft



ONBOARDING & EDUCATION

- On-site OR training
- No-cost practice tissue



ON-DEMAND TISSUE & PROCESSING

MEET THE TEAM



HALL MCGEE, MD

Medical Director, CORE Eye Division

Dr. McGee leads CORE's corneal transplant program as well as fosters strategic and collaborative relationships with key stakeholders in the CORE service region and in the health care community at large. In addition to being a CORE board member, Dr. McGee has been a private-practice ophthalmologist more than a decade. Dr. McGee completed his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Virginia and trained at the prestigious Casey Eye Institute.



ANITA GORDON, CTBS

Director, CORE Eye Bank Operations and Tissue Recovery

Anita holds a bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership, has earned her Six Sigma Yellow Belt certification, and spent more than a decade in the OR working in ophthalmic surgery before joining CORE in 2011. Prior to leading the Eye Bank, Anita had been CORE's Tissue Recovery Manager, where she oversaw CORE's day-to-day tissue recovery operations. Anita is focused on innovation and works to continually expand CORE's technological offerings for transplant surgeons and corneal transplant patients.



JANICE ANDERSON

Ocular Customer Service Specialist, CORE Eye Bank

Janice is our most experienced staff member, with more than 40 years of eye banking experience. She started her career at the Medical Eye Bank of Western Pennsylvania, and she has continued her journey in corneal tissue processing at the CORE Eye Bank. She works directly with surgeons and their surgical staff to provide the best corneal tissue for patients. Janice also communicates with outside eye banks to provide tissue for patients worldwide.



JUSTIN BORK, BS, CTBS, CEBT

Technical Ocular Specialist, CORE Eye Bank

Justin has been with CORE for nearly 15 years — first as a Recovery Coordinator for more than 10 years, performing corneal and whole eye recoveries. He then transitioned to the CORE Eye Bank in 2017, where he now trains recovery staff on the recovery of corneal tissue for transplant and whole globes for research protocols, evaluates and distributes corneas. Justin also performs DSAEK and DMEK for local and national surgeons.



SARAH CZAJKOWSKI, CTBS, LFD

Technical Ocular Specialist/Community Liaison, CORE

Sarah started her ocular journey with the CORE Eye Bank in January 2021. Her career at CORE began as a Recovery Coordinator in 2016 and later transitioned to the Allegheny County Medical Examiner Liaison. Prior to working at CORE, she was a licensed funeral director and embalmer in Pittsburgh. With her experience in recovering ocular tissue and liaising with medical examiners, funeral directors and coroners, Sarah can provide surgeons, surgical staff, and the eye banking community her expertise in communication and ocular knowledge.



MARIA DIDIANO

Administrative Coordinator, CORE Eye Bank

Maria's responsibilities include recipient follow-up and donor family communications. Specifically, she writes and sends the donor family letters which detail the donor was able to heal and save lives. She also surveys surgeons and surgical staff to confirm that CORE is supplying quality products. Maria holds a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education/Social Sciences and joined the CORE Eye Bank after a career as a social studies teacher.

*CEBT: EBAA Certified Eye Bank Technician

*CTBS: AATB Certified Tissue Bank Specialist

*LFD: Licensed Funeral Director

WHY CHOOSE CORE?



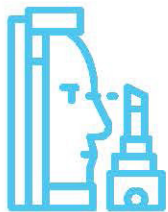
**COMPLETE
OPO**



97%
DSAOK
SUCCESS RATE



2%
ADVERSE
REACTION RATE



**IN-HOUSE
OPERATING
ROOMS**



**EXPERIENCED
STAFF**

&



EBAA
ACCREDITED

**ON-SITE
LAB &
TESTING**



24/7
STAFF AVAILABILITY

**STATE-OF-THE-ART
FACILITIES**

- Dedicated corneal processing suite
- Class 7 clean room
- Zeiss OPMI 6 microscope



3^{MO.}
RECIPIENT
CHECK AFTER TX



0
ADVANCED
NOTICE NEEDED

FAQs

HOW IS TISSUE REQUESTED?

Surgical tissue can be requested via email and fax.
Email: eyebank@core.org
Fax: (412) 963-4595
Online: www.core.org

HOW LONG BEFORE SURGERY SHOULD TISSUE BE REQUESTED?

Although we always appreciate as much advanced notice as possible, the CORE Eye Bank is able to provide tissue for emergency surgeries with less than 24 hours' notice.

IS THERE ADEQUATE TISSUE TO MEET ALL REQUESTS?

Yes. The CORE Eye Bank can always meet tissue needs. If we don't have tissue available, our long-standing relationships with partnering eye banks allow us to import tissue should it be necessary.

CAN TISSUE BE CUSTOMIZED?

Yes. The CORE Eye Bank has the extensive knowledge and expertise to customize your tissue requests. We offer DSEK and DMEK processing options, with special requests for ultra-thin DSEK grafts, pre-punch/pre-load DMEK grafts and customized corneal markings. Surgeons can also make special requests for cell counts and preservation times.

WHAT IF A CASE IS CANCELLED AFTER TISSUE HAS ALREADY BEEN REQUESTED?

Simply, call the CORE Eye Bank at (412) 963-3550 to cancel an order. In cases where the tissue has already been delivered, the CORE Eye Bank will come to collect the unused tissue. There will be no charge in these cases.

WHAT ONBOARDING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED?

The CORE Eye Bank staff are more than happy to assist new surgeons with setting up their new corneal surgical practice, or educating current corneal surgeons with our tissue and processing. We can set up operating room time at a local hospital or surgical center to educate the surgeons and their staff on what to expect from our Eye Bank. We can also provide on-site education in one of our state-of-the-art OR's at CORE. We also have educational opportunities for ophthalmic residents and fellows just beginning their surgical journeys. We provide no-cost practice tissue if a practice is looking to offer a new procedure to patients.

HOW ARE PAYMENTS HANDLED?

The CORE Eye Bank Finance Department will invoice each office after the delivery of any corneal tissue. If there are questions about a payment, please call (412) 963-3550.

WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION?

The CORE Eye Bank is staffed 24/7. You can contact us via phone at (412) 963-3550 or email at eyebank@core.org.

WHERE CAN CORE'S PROOF OF ACCREDITATION BE ACCESSED?

To receive a copy of our accreditations and certifications, please contact the CORE Eye Bank via phone at (412) 963-3550 or by email at eyebank@core.org.



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Charleston, WV 25325

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