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Published: February 08, 2009 03:03 pm



Hawaii Eye Seminar featured Holmes County physician

Special to The Star Herald

Dr. Connie McCaa delivered three speeches at the 25th Annual Winter Seminar of the Hawaiian Ophthalmological Society in Honolulu. McCaa, who has numerous patients from Attala and Holmes Counties, is a native of West.

McCaa has two ophthalmology clinics in metro Jackson.

Dr. Ming Chen of Honolulu, chairman of the 25th anniversary seminar, said McCaa was invited to be a major speaker because "she has the most experience in handling refractive surgical complications in the country.

"She is highly recommended for her authority" in the field of LASIK, he said. LASIK is a popular refractive surgery that reshapes the cornea to correct nearsighted and farsighted vision problems, as well as astigmatism.

The Jan. 16 and 17 seminar in that state capital on the island of Oahu drew physicians and ophthalmological professionals from across the United States.

McCaa's clinics are her ophthalmology clinic in suite 656 at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson and her LASIK Laser Eye Center at 4800 Lakeland Drive in Flowood, a Jackson suburb.

Specializing in cornea and refractive surgery, McCaa was one of the first physicians in the nation to perform LASIK, has performed the laser procedure thousands of times to correct Mississippi patients' vision, and is a consulting surgeon for other LASIK doctors who have patients with complications. For many years, she has been listed as one of the Best Doctors in America.

Her medical lectures in Hawaii covered how to optimize LASIK outcomes and prevent complications, as well as how to treat LASIK complications. She also delivered at Jan. 16 luncheon address on political action and tort reform concerning ophthalmology.

McCaa said, "It's a real honor for me to be invited to talk to other eye surgeons about how they may avoid LASIK complications and what they may do if complications arise."

McCaa's Web site for her clinics is www.ConnieMcCaa.com.



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Published: April 08, 2009 01:08 pm



Local resident's fear of LASIK eased by new technology

Special to The Star Herald

Anna Pickle now has perfect eyesight, which involved three "miracles."

The first was that she had LASIK laser treatment – at all – to correct her vision. "I'm a scary-type person. I'd been afraid to do it," Pickle, 31, said. "I have so many friends with bad vision who are scared to do it."

The second miracle was: "It wasn't a scary thing at all," she said. Connie McCaa, M.D., Ph.D., performed her LASIK at the LASIK Laser Eye Center in Flowood. "There was no fear. They talked me through it. It was no big deal," Pickle said. "It's very fast."

The third miracle involved science. "The fact that Dr. McCaa did correct me to 20/20 vision was amazing. I've had horrible, horrible vision since fourth grade," the Kosciusko mother of two said. "Without her machine, there's no way I could have risked having it done."

McCaa's machine is the state-of-the-art Pentacam HR. For six months, McCaa has had the only Pentacam HR in metro Jackson.

The 3-D corneal scanner is at McCaa's ophthalmology clinic, in the West Tower of St. Dominic's Hospital in Jackson. The Pentacam is used for all LASIK patients' pre-exams as well as for many cataract, lens implant, and other refractive surgeries. It reads up to 138,000 elevation points in the cornea (the clear layer over the front of the eye).

"The Pentacam HR tells me whether a patient's corneas are thick enough to safely and successfully perform LASIK," McCaa explained. Thin corneas are one of the most common causes of LASIK complications nationwide, although complications are relatively rare.

McCaa said fear of LASIK is not uncommon. "It's natural that patients like Anna, who already have poor eyesight, would fear losing their eyesight if there are complications. But I've never had any patient lose their sight from LASIK." McCaa has performed LASIK thousands of times.

Because Pickle was extremely nearsighted (with astigmatism), that can be associated with thin corneas. But the Pentacam indicated Pickle's corneas were thick enough to have LASIK safely.

Timothy Deeds, who represents Pentacam HR manufacturer Oculus Inc. of Germany, called it "the best insurance policy you can have. There are none in the Jackson area, still, but Dr. McCaa's. She's certainly a step ahead. It can offer a tremendous safety level to her patients." Deeds noted that U.S. military hospitals are required to have a Pentacam HR for LASIK and other refractive surgeries.

Pickle heard about the Pentacam from her Kosciusko optometrist, Dr. Angela Thomas, who referred her to McCaa. Another doctor as well as a friend, who already had received LASIK from McCaa, also encouraged her to go. "I became aware that Dr. McCaa has years of experience and prides herself in staying up-to-date with the newest technology," Pickle said.

A nationally known authority in refractive surgery, McCaa was one of the first in the country to perform LASIK. Ranked for a decade as one of the Best Doctors in America, she has been board certified since 1983. McCaa also is well known as a consultant surgeon for correcting other refractive surgeon's LASIK complications.

Pickle's vision isn't the only outlook that has changed.

"Every morning, I think about the LASIK. It's a gift," Pickle said. "I'm already thinking about my first summer without having glasses or contacts and doing water sports, without worrying that my contacts will fall out."

"For my husband, Rob, it's been an enlightening experience for him to see my face light up – just because I'm able to see!"

Photos



Anna Pickle **Courtesy Photo/The Star Herald**
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Dr. Connie McCaa **Courtesy Photo/The Star Herald**
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