



RETINA ASSOCIATES OF KENTUCKY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Retina Associates of Kentucky
Dr. John Kitchens First in the World
to Implant Genentech's *SUSVIMO* Following FDA Approval**

On November 30th, 2021, John Kitchens, MD, from Retina Associates of Kentucky, was the first in the world to surgically implant FDA approved SUSVIMO at the Lexington Surgery Center in Lexington, Kentucky. For several years, the doctors at Retina Associates of Kentucky have been active in clinical trials for SUSVIMO, the first and only sustained release treatment for Wet Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD). In October 2021 the FDA approved Genentech's SUSVIMO for AMD, a common and potentially blinding eye disease that is currently treated with monthly injections. Since the approval date, there has been extensive coordination between the Lexington Surgery Center and Cardinal Health, their pharmaceutical distribution partner, to allow for the first patient to potentially benefit from this new sight saving technique.

“This is a really big day for patients with wet age-related macular degeneration. Having an option for patients that can dramatically reduce the number of office visits and injections for patients and their families cannot be understated. It is truly a groundbreaking accomplishment that will change the way we treat people with this condition,” said Dr. John Kitchens.

AMD is a medical condition which may result in blurred or no vision in the center of the vision. It is the leading cause of blindness in people over the age of 60. Early in the disease in patients with “dry” AMD, there are often minimal symptoms. If AMD advances, it becomes the more vision threatening “wet” AMD, which is called “wet” due to blood vessel growth and leakage. If the disease is discovered in its early stages, treatments can help prevent the vision loss from both dry and wet AMD. Patients with wet AMD are treated with frequent intraocular injections of Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF) administered by a Retina Specialist in the office.

SUSVIMO (ranibizumab injection) is a prescription medicine used to treat adults with neovascular wet AMD twice-yearly vs. frequent-monthly injections. SUSVIMO is placed surgically into the eye by a Retina Specialist during an outpatient procedure, taking place in a surgical center. SUSVIMO releases medicine slowly into the eye providing continuous treatment. A good candidate is a patient who has responded to at least two injections of a VEGF inhibitor in the gel-like part of the eye. Patients should be monitored after the surgical implant in case any side effects emerge.

Retina Associates is proud to have been instrumental in this medical milestone, giving AMD patients a better quality of life with the hope and reassurance that our physicians are on the forefront of vision preserving treatments.

Our physicians at Retina Associates of Kentucky are Board Certified in Ophthalmology and have completed a fellowship in vitreoretinal disease. Our doctors are listed among the “Best Doctors in America” and “America’s Top Ophthalmologists” and are internationally recognized for their expertise in diagnosing and treating retina disorders.

In addition, our physicians have over 40 years of experience in vitreoretinal surgery and perform more surgical procedures than any other practice in Kentucky. They regularly educate other physicians nationally and internationally on surgical procedures, and consistently bring the latest in surgical techniques and instrumentation to the operating room to improve our patients’ vision and quality of life.

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