## The BVA Beacon

### The New York Regional Group Newsletter

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**NEWS FROM BVA DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**Glenn E. Minney**

The Department of Veterans Affairs plans to issue a 'Veteran's Choice Card.' The new card will buy care from non-VA care providers for veterans if they face long waits for VA care -- defined initially as more than 30 days -- or if they reside more than 40 miles from VA care. The intent is to eliminate VA patient wait lists. The new card will be an informational insurance card to be presented to non-VA health care providers to identify the veteran and to verify eligibility for episodes of care that, sometime earlier, were arranged through and approved by a VA care coordinator.

Remember this, **do not** start going to non-VA physicians until you have the card. Also remember**, wait until you are referred by a VA physician.**

NEW VA ID CARD

Many veterans who go to the VA for service have already received the new VA ID card. This new one has VA in Braille and does not have your social security on it. If you haven’t received your new one by the end of September why not check with your local VA to find out when you may be receiving it.

NEW TREATMENT FOR GLAUCOMA

Over 2.2 million Americans suffer from glaucoma — now a new procedure may relieve symptoms.

Glaucoma is a disease in which there is a buildup of pressure behind the eye. The pressure often damages the optic nerve and can result in vision loss and blindness if not treated properly. Most glaucoma patients use eye drops to treat the disease. However, managing the eye drops— which sometimes need to be administered multiple times during the day— can be cumbersome.

"I'm very bad in remembering to take medicine or eye drops. But I do my best," 78-year-old Emad Khaja, who used three different eye drops for his glaucoma, told FoxNews.com.

One solution for managing the disease is a new minimally invasive surgical procedure that inserts a device called iStent, providing a more permanent solution for glaucoma patients.

"iStent is a novel device that is the latest tool we have to fight glaucoma,” said Dr. Tal Raviv, an ophthalmologist in New York City. “It's a small stent that's used to overcome the blockage that's present in glaucoma,"

iStent is the smallest device to be implanted in the human body and works by opening up the blockage to relieve the pressure. Like stents used in other parts of the body, doctors insert the iStent by visualizing the blockage and bypassing it.

Currently, the iStent procedure is recommended for patients with cataracts and glaucoma. The procedure typically takes an additional ten minutes after the cataract surgery and patients can go home on the same day.

“What's wonderful about the iStent is because it's so minimally invasive, the follow-up is no different than a typical cataract surgery follow up,” Raviv said.

In clinical trials, 85 percent of patients who received the iStent were off of the eye drops within a year.

FROM THE EDITOR

Another successful BVA National Convention was held in Reno this past August. Attendees from the NYRG were Arthur Morris, Joe Martone, Dennis O’Connell, Enrique Sanchez and Ron White.

Why not come to the next one which will be held in Louisville, KY.

***GOD BLESS AMERICA***!