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## Free LASIK Surgery an Eye Opener for Quads

Last summer eye surgeons Dr. Robert Maloney and Dr. Daniel Durrie launched Focus on Independence, a national program to provide free LASIK surgery to quadriplegics. In its initial phase, the project has attracted more than 20 patients and dozens of inquiries. Pleased with these early results, the Focus on Independence team hopes to create a network that offers a participating surgeon within an hour of every quad in the United States.

“This is a reachable goal. I say that because every doctor we’ve contacted about registering with the program has been eager to get involved,” says Dr. Maloney, principal of the Los Angeles-based Maloney Vision Institute and the ‘Eye Guy’ featured on the television show Extreme Makeover. “I don’t have to convince anyone that fumbling with glasses and contacts is a nuisance for others but can be truly limiting for quads. LASIK surgery is a small way to make a big improvement in their quality of life, a way to really increase their independence.”

Considering costs for vision correction procedures range from \$4,000 to \$6,000 for both eyes, Focus on Independence goes beyond the average feel-good initiative that looks pretty in a press release. Furthermore, while the medical community is renowned for its tangled red tape, this project is comparatively uncomplicated.

Prospective patients in the United States contact the program’s headquarters at the Maloney Vision Institute in California. After verifying the person fits the plan’s parameters, staff members do the work of researching ophthalmologists in the patient’s area, including registering them if they are not already part of the network. Usually within one week, the LASIK candidate has a list of participating surgeons.

The procedure itself takes about 15 minutes. Most people have 20/20 vision within a few days. While this surgery has become fairly routine in the past decade, it is still surgery.

“We don’t have a come-one, come-all registration process for the doctors,” Dr. Maloney says. “I wanted only the best for this program, and I know who those guys are.”

Presently the Focus On Independence program is limited to people over the age of 18 who have suffered a traumatic spinal cord injury and have little to no use of their hands or arms, making it difficult or impossible to handle glasses or contacts without assistance. If the program goes well, Dr. Maloney would like to expand it to quads who have suffered a stroke or live with mobility impairments such as cerebral palsy or post-polio.

For more information, visit the Focus on Independence section of [www.maloneyvision.com](http://www.maloneyvision.com); email [focus@maloneyvision.com](mailto:focus@maloneyvision.com); or call 310-208-3937.