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Beverly Hills Eye Surgeon Gets Surprise Inundation of Requests From Around the World for Information About New Treatment That Saved USA Bobsled Captain Steve Holcomb's Eyesight

Olympic athlete's story raising awareness of new medical procedure for condition that affects millions of people worldwide

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Feb. 18 /PRNewswire/ -- According to the Boxer Wachler Vision Institute, U.S. bobsled Capt. Steve Holcomb may do more than just bring home gold at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. The story of how Holcomb went from going blind due to a degenerative eye condition called Keratoconus to having his vision restored with a breakthrough new medical procedure called C3-R is raising global.

"Keratoconus can be a devastating condition, and it affects millions of people worldwide," says Dr. Brian Boxer Wachler of Beverly Hills, California, pioneer of the C3-R treatment. "Keratoconus can take away from people the ability to read, to drive a car, and to just live a normal life. When Steve first came to my office he was facing having to leave his sport because he could no longer see well enough to drive his bobsled downhill."

Holcomb's coaches and the USOC weren't ready to give up on their best driver. They researched C3-R, then a relatively new procedure, and thought it was the best chance to save Holcomb's eyesight. The USOC and the USA Bobsled and Skeleton Federation took the exceptional step of paying for Holcomb to have the treatment.

"Previously, the only treatment for severe Keratoconus was a cornea transplant," says Dr. Boxer Wachler. "This is why C3-R is being seen as such a breakthrough. C3-R is non-surgical. It uses vitamin applications and light to strengthen the cornea. C3-R can cure the disease without the need for a cornea transplant. The treatment only takes 30 minutes and can be done in a doctor's office."

Dr. Boxer Wachler has successfully treated numerous Keratoconus patients with C3-R over the last six years. Still, though, the global standard for the treatment

of severe Keratoconus is a cornea transplant, an invasive surgery that is painful and carries the risk of rejection.

"It can be hard to get doctors to switch to a new procedure, especially one so radically different," says Dr. Boxer Wachler. "But now that is dramatically changing because of Steve. Steve's story is making doctors and patients all over the world aware of C3-R."

Shortly after having his Keratoconus cured with C3-R and receiving insertable contacts to further improve his vision, Holcomb won the World Bobsled Championship -- the first U.S. medal in bobsled in 50 years. Now, he is the USA's best hope for a gold medal in Bobsled at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics.

The news coverage of Holcomb's story, from legally blind to World Champion, has had an incredible surprise effect in raising awareness of C3-R. Since the Olympic games began, the Boxer Wachler Vision Institute has been flooded with phone calls, emails, and letters from eye surgeons and patients all over the world wanting to know more about the C3-R treatment.

"If this keeps up we are going to have to rename the procedure Holcomb C3-R," says Dr. Boxer Wachler. "It's been an absolute miracle. Steve's personal story has helped so many people by raising awareness of this new treatment."

About Dr. Brian Boxer Wachler

Dr. Brian S. Boxer Wachler, MD is a world-renowned ophthalmologist, nationally and internationally admired for his expertise in Keratoconus treatments, LASIK and other vision correction procedures. Dr. Boxer Wachler was named as one of "America's Top Doctors" by *Castle Connolly* this year. He founded the Boxer Wachler Vision Institute in Beverly Hills, California to further research into new vision correction procedures and provide patients with the most advanced vision care treatments. He has served on the Board of Medical Directors of a non-profit Keratoconus Foundation and was Chairman of the Communications Committee for the Internal Society of Refractive Surgery. Because of his expertise, he is routinely invited to lecture worldwide on the latest advances in Keratoconus treatments, safety in refractive surgery, and other new refractive surgery innovations. He has published over 65 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters in his field and is widely regarded as one of the world's best eye surgeons.

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