NOTE TO OPHTHALMOLOGIST: THIS FORM IS INTENDED AS A SAMPLE. PLEASE REVIEW AND MODIFY AS NEEDED, AND PLACE ON YOUR LETTERHEAD.

**Laser surgery to treat ROP (retinopathy of prematurity)**

**Your baby has a condition of the retina (the back of the eye) called ROP.** When a baby is born prematurely (too early), the retina has not had time to finish forming. After the premature birth, the blood vessels at the back of the eye stop growing. Soon the eye starts again to make a chemical called VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor). This chemical makes the blood vessels start growing again. But these are not normal blood vessels. These abnormal blood vessels can bleed. They can also pull (detach) the retina away from its normal position. This is called an RD (retinal detachment), and it can cause blindness.

**Ophthalmologists usually treat ROP with laser surgery.** This type of laser surgery is called PRP (pan-retinal photocoagulation). The baby is sedated. Then the ophthalmologist (eye surgeon) aims the laser at the side of the retina (the peripheral retina) through the baby’s pupil. The laser stops the eye from making more of the VEGF chemical. The abnormal blood vessels usually stop growing, the retina stays attached, and the central vision stays good.

**Sometimes, ophthalmologists cannot use laser surgery to treat ROP.** Some babies are too sick to have surgery or anesthesia. In other babies, the abnormal blood vessels are too far back in the eye to use the laser safely. Other parts of the eye or blood in the eye may block the path to the abnormal blood vessels. When this happens, ophthalmologists inject a medicine in the baby’s eye. The medicine stops the eye from making more of the VEGF chemical. The baby may still need laser surgery later. The laser surgery is needed if the ROP comes back, or if the retina does not grow completely after the injection.

**Doctors do not know if the anti-VEGF medicine is safe for premature babies.** The medicine gets out of the eye and into the baby’s bloodstream. It reaches the brain, lungs, and kidneys. The brain, lungs, and kidneys need the VEGF chemical to grow. Doctors do not know if the medicine injected in the eye harms other parts of the baby’s body. They are watching babies who get this medicine to see if they have problems.

**The goal of laser surgery is to keep the retina attached and save the baby’s vision.** Central vision may be good, but the baby will lose some side vision. The laser surgery does not work on every baby. Some babies need more than one laser surgery. Some babies lose vision or go blind even if they have the laser surgery. Sometimes, the abnormal vessels keep growing after laser surgery. These abnormal blood vessels pull the retina out of its normal position and cause an RD. The baby will need other types of surgery to treat the RD.

**Your baby could have very poor vision or go blind if the ROP is not treated.**

* Your baby cannot choose whether to have treatment. You need to decide if your baby will get treatment for ROP. You have the legal right to choose for your baby. Because you are an adult, you can refuse (say no) to treatment to save your own vision or your own life.
* Your ophthalmologist has a legal duty to treat the baby. If you decide not to treat the ROP, your ophthalmologist must talk to other doctors and child protective services about your choice.

**As with all surgery, there are risks (problems that can happen) with laser surgery.** While the eye surgeon cannot tell you about all risks, here are some of the most common or serious:

* The laser surgery might not stop the ROP.
* The ROP can come back again. The baby may need another laser surgery to treat the ROP.
* Your baby could lose vision or go blind.
* Anesthesia can cause heart or breathing problems, or death
* The laser surgery could cause other eye problems:
  + Loss of side (peripheral) vision
  + Damage to the retina: RD, fold in the retina, dragging or scarring of the macula (center of the retina)
  + Bleeding in the eye (vitreous hemorrhage)
  + High eye pressure (glaucoma)
  + Low eye pressure (hypotony)
  + Burns to the cornea (clear covering of the front of the eye)
  + Clouding or scarring of the cornea
  + Damage to the iris (colored part of the eye)
  + Eyes that look in different directions (strabismus)
  + Need for very thick glasses
  + Bigger eye (enlargement)
  + Smaller eye (shrinkage)

**Consent**. By signing below, you consent (agree) that:

* You read this informed consent form, or someone read it to you.
* You understand the information in this form.
* The ophthalmologist or staff offered you a copy of this form.
* You are aware that the baby may lose vision or go blind.
* You are aware that the baby may need another surgery.
* The ophthalmologist or staff answered your questions about laser surgery for ROP.
* You understand that it is your right to refuse this treatment for your baby. You also understand that if you do refuse the treatment, the ophthalmologist must ask other doctors or child protective services to talk to you about your decision.
* You agree to the laser surgery.

**I want the ophthalmologist to do laser surgery on my baby’s:**

* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ right eye**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ left eye**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ both eyes.**

Patient (or person authorized to sign for patient) Date