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HEADLINE: PATIENT SUES BEACH EYE SURGEON FOR \$1.6 MILLION;
MAN ACCUSES SURGEON OF DAMAGING HIS EYE DURING CATARACT PROCEDURE 2 YEARS
AGO/

BYLINE: Jon Frank THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

DATELINE: VIRGINIA BEACH

BODY:

An eye surgeon specializing in vision correction has been sued for allegedly injuring a patient's eye during an operation to remove a cataract.

The lawsuit, filed last week in Circuit Court, seeks \$1.6 million from Dr. Ronald B. Frenkel and the American Association of Professional Eye Care Specialists .

Frenkel, who operates AAPECS at 279 Independence Blvd., specializes in **LASIK**, a technique that surgically reshapes the cornea to correct vision. Frenkel advertises the procedure on local radio stations.

The lawsuit claims that Frenkel operated on the left eye of Jose Sunaz on June 2, 2002, to remove a cataract obscuring Sunaz's vision. The procedure tore and permanently damaged Sunaz's iris, according to the lawsuit.

After surgery, the lawsuit says, Sunaz's vision worsened. He suffered double vision, blurred vision , glaring and hemorrhaging.

Sunaz will require corrective surgery to implant a lens and restore his vision, the lawsuit says.

In March, a different surgeon performed similar surgery to remove a cataract from Sunaz's right eye, and it was successful, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit claims that Frenkel should not have operated in his clinic but in a hospital where "reparative measures" could be undertaken should complications arise. The lawsuit also claims that Frenkel failed to properly "stain" the left eye before surgery and did not properly anesthetize Sunaz.

Eric Hofmann, an administrator at AAPECS, said Thursday that Frenkel had not yet been served with the lawsuit. He confirmed that Sunaz had been a patient but said Sunaz had not returned to the office for regular follow-up visits after surgery.

Frenkel last saw Sunaz a week after the surgery, Hofmann said, and then "didn't show up for any more of his visits. We have not seen him in two years."

Another former patient sued Frenkel three years ago for alleged negligence during a **LASIK** procedure.

That case went to trial in December 2001, and a jury ordered Frenkel to pay the former patient \$2,200, which was the cost of the surgery. The patient had sued for \$1 million.

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GRAPHIC: Fact Box/ LAWSUIT/ The lawsuit claims that Dr. Ronald B. Frenkel operated on the left eye of Jose Sunaz on June 2, 2002, to remove a cataract obscuring Sunaz's vision. The procedure tore and permanently damaged Sunaz's iris, according to the lawsuit./

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