***This can be sent out to your patients, as well as your entire database, after you edit it below by replacing the red text with your own text.***

Subject: Share Your Story

Dear Patient, Colleague, and Friend of the Practice,

For xx years, I have been a member of the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (ISHRS), the world’s largest medical organization devoted to all aspects of the management and treatment of hair loss. Since 1993, the ISHRS has led the way in educating physicians, encouraging and supporting research, and serving as an expert source for the media in order to provide accurate information to the general public.

**This past year, the ISHRS started the public awareness campaign “Fight the FIGHT”(Fight The Fraudulent, Illicit + Global Hair Transplants) to address the alarming problem of non-physicians performing hair restoration surgery.** In Turkey, Iran, and countries throughout Europe, there are reports of unscrupulous clinics luring patients from throughout the world to travel there for hair restoration procedures. With an estimate of more than 1,000 clinics and just 20 to 30 hair surgeons in the city of Istanbul, the great majority of the more than 1,000 patients treated daily with a hair transplant are having their procedure performed by “technicians” who in just about all cases have no medical license or for that matter no training in surgery and sterile technique.

 In the United States and Canada, these clinics operate in a more subtle way, most commonly using a “turn-key” approach. This involves a plastic surgeon, dermatologist, or other type of physician who purchases a commercially-marketable device that can help perform one step of the hair transplant procedure, then hires technicians by the day to perform most, if not the entire, procedure. This includes not only removing the grafts with this device, but also in most cases designing the hairline and making the incisions in the scalp into which the grafts will be placed. The patient is either unknowingly told the doctor will be performing the procedure, or is assured by the doctor that the technicians are “experts and as good as any doctor in performing hair transplants”.

 We, the members of the ISHRS, disagree with this claim of equivalency, and have several grave concerns over this turn-key approach to performing hair restoration surgery for several reasons.

1. The turn-key approach to hair restoration surgery appears to be a violation of state medical laws, that state that surgery (defined as “the treatment of injuries or disorders of the body by incision or manipulation, especially with instruments”) is only to be performed by a licensed doctor or similar licensed health care providers. **Hair transplant surgery is a surgery**, involving the making of hundreds to thousands of excisions of hair grafts using the follicular unit excision technique (FUE) and similarly hundreds to thousands of incisions into which the grafts are placed.

 **Furthermore, technicians are not permitted to make medical diagnoses, determine patient appropriateness for surgery, design hairlines, or make incisions in or excise tissue from the scalp.**

 While not all physicians using the turn-key approach are advertising their services for hair restoration surgery or being promoted by the device manufacturers as “experts in FUE hair transplants.” They usually fail to inform patients that the photos shown in the marketing materials are not of their own patients, or that the procedure will in fact be performed NOT by the surgeon, but rather by unlicensed individuals who are not trained in proper surgery care.

 2. As a respected medical society, the ISHRS – which is its physician members – is alarmed by the growing number of patients walking into members’ offices suffering from the complications and poor results from improperly performed surgery. We feel it is imperative to address this issue through education.

 We are not implying that only ISHRS members are qualified to perform hair restoration surgery. However, all members of the ISHRS are expected to abide by the highest ethical principles, and this includes not designating the important steps of the hair transplant surgery to technicians.

 It is our hope to educate the public and provide fair and balanced information as a counter-balance to the heavy advertising undertaken not only by physicians but also the manufacturers of these hair transplant devices that are misleading the public.

 If you wish to learn more, or to share a story of a particular patient, please contact my office at ***insert your office’s appropriate email address***, or visit [www.FightTheFIGHT.ishrs.org](http://www.fightthefight.ishrs.org).

Sincerely,

Dr. xxx xxx