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Legal Digest

Woman sues North Suburban Eye Specialists over surgery, ties to Vikings

Premium content from Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal - by Jim Hammerand, Staff writer

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A woman who says she was blinded during corrective-vision surgery is suing a highly advertised doctor and his Coon Rapids clinic, alleging not only malpractice, but misrepresentation of the clinic's ties to the [Minnesota Vikings](#).

Layla Linegar said she had three eye surgeries at North Suburban Eye Specialists in 2009, all performed by Dr. Mark Lobanoff, that left her without vision in her left eye or close-range vision in her right eye. Now living in Florida, Linegar was an Elk River resident at the time.

Lobanoff and the clinic most visibly bill themselves as the Vikings' "preferred LASIK provider" on metro-area billboards.

In an unusual twist for a malpractice case, Linegar's suit said the clinic's Vikings connection helped persuade her to go under Lobanoff's laser. The suit, filed in Minneapolis' U.S. District Court, accuses the doctor and clinic of violating the Minnesota Consumer Fraud Act by falsely claiming they are the football team's preferred provider.

"That dubious claim is based on just one testimonial from Greg 'Coffin Corner' Coleman, who indeed punted for the Vikings 25 years ago, before the invention of LASIK," wrote **Todd Krouner**, Linegar's Chappaqua, N.Y., attorney.

[Meagher & Geer](#) attorney **Cecilie Loidolt**, representing defendants Lobanoff and North Suburban Eye Specialists, said in a statement for this article that the clinic and Vikings have a "contractual relationship" and that "there have been no false statements regarding the

relationship with the Minnesota Vikings."

She called Linegar's injury "unfortunate," but said Lobanoff provided appropriate care. The defendants have not filed a response to the suit.

The Vikings are not defendants in the case.

When asked about the lawsuit, Vikings Vice President of Legal Affairs and Chief Administrative Officer **Kevin Warren** requested a copy of the complaint, but did not confirm an agreement with the clinic. The team later declined comment through a spokesman.

Linegar underwent cornea transplant surgery last month, but still faces the possibility of tissue rejection and infection, Krouner said.

The suit asks U.S. District Judge **Paul Magnuson** for unspecified compensation and to stop the clinic and doctor from claiming the endorsement.

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