

# PPO

## Best Practices

Assuring Successful  
Bariatric Surgery  
Outcomes



## **PPO BEST PRACTICES FOR ASSURING SUCCESSFUL BARIATRIC SURGERY OUTCOMES**

### **ISSUE BRIEF**

### **CASE STUDY: CENTENNIAL CENTER**

#### **Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity**

Centennial Medical Center, an ASMBS/SRC Center of Excellence located in Nashville, Tennessee, offers a multidisciplinary model of treatment for patients suffering with the disease of morbid obesity. Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity recognizes obesity and morbid obesity as chronic, life-long, multi-factorial disease processes that must be treated on a continuum based on the individual patient's needs.

Each year, Centennial treats over 400 patients ranging in age from teenagers to senior citizens. According to Centennial, the facility is known for its all-inclusive aftercare program, which is free for the rest of a patient's life. Patients have multiple follow up visits with the surgeon during the first year. To enhance follow up opportunities Centennial offers group follow up visits for life at no cost to the patient. Additionally, Centennial expects its patients to regularly consult with the dietitians and exercise physiologists through the entire post-operative process, which extends indefinitely. This counseling is available by phone or in person at patients' convenience.

Centennial recognizes the need for multidisciplinary involvement of health care professionals. Prior to surgery, patients initially undergo a psychological evaluation, including a structured interview by a psychologist and several pencil and paper tests. Once in the program, patients have access to a wide variety of healthcare professionals, including psychologists, dietitians, and exercise physiologists, both before and after surgery, for support, coaching and counseling.

Centennial strongly emphasizes patient engagement in ongoing support groups and has developed a variety of platforms – web based and in-person to meet patient needs. Centennial offers approximately 11 psychologist led support groups and 25 patient led support groups per month. Pre-operatively, patients are asked to attend at least one meeting, and post-operatively patients are expected to attend a support group meeting monthly. Periodically Centennial contacts long term post-operative patients who do not routinely seek follow up to assess progress and health status.

Centennial has also created an outreach program to local Primary Care Providers (PCPs). Pam Davis, Program Director, routinely visits local PCPs to disseminate information about bariatric surgery. PCPs are an important component of the successful bariatric program because they interface with patients both pre- and post-operatively. Centennial believes it is important to educate PCPs on bariatric surgery as an effective treatment for individuals with severe obesity and co-morbid conditions, but also recognizes that PCPs have a significant role in managing patients' lifelong care after surgery. PCPs need to be trained to recognize issues related to bariatric surgery (such as reinforcement of nutrition and exercise programs) as well as to potentially help to manage micronutrient deficiencies.

Primary care providers may include internists, family practice physicians, nurse practitioners, and gynecologists. Centennial works to create partnership with PCPs and treating specialists as a key strategy to improving the long-term success of obesity treatment. Elements of Centennial's successful partnership with PCPs and treating specialists include:

- Educational support via CME offerings, mailed updates, provision of resource articles
- Consultative support regarding nutritional deficiencies
- Onsite visits to primary care provider and specialist offices
- Physician to physician visits to provide current information regarding the safety and efficacy of bariatric surgery
- Provision of patient education via support materials or seminars
- Facilitation of patient referral and approval process for bariatric surgery when indicated

Centennial offers ongoing education and support for specialists in the fields of cardiology, orthopedics, endocrinology, fertility and pulmonology. This education may include materials relating to obesity in general or those correlating a direct relationship between obesity and the specific specialty.

In the case of physicians who are uncomfortable referring patients for bariatric surgery, Davis brings with her information regarding the safety and efficacy of bariatric surgery; often one of Centennial's surgeons accompanies her as well. For PCPs who already feel comfortable referring patients for bariatric surgery, Davis brings articles on long-term outcomes, follow up care, and other topics in bariatric surgery. Through these personal campaigns, Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity educates PCPs all across the large metropolitan area of Nashville, Tennessee.

WEBSITE: <http://www.cmcwls.com/default>

**CONTACT:**

Pam Davis, Certified Bariatric Nurse, CCM  
Bariatric Program Director, Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity  
Tel: (615) 342-7490  
Email: [Pamela.Davis@hcahealthcare.com](mailto:Pamela.Davis@hcahealthcare.com)

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