

PPO

Best Practices

Assuring Successful
Bariatric Surgery
Outcomes



PPO BEST PRACTICES FOR ASSURING SUCCESSFUL BARIATRIC SURGERY OUTCOMES

ISSUE BRIEF

CASE STUDY: GEISINGER

Geisinger Center for Nutrition and Weight Management

The Geisinger Center for Nutrition and Weight Management located in Danville, Pennsylvania at the heart of Geisinger Health System, offers a team-based approach to the care of overweight and obese patients. The Geisinger Health System is a physician-led integrated health care system that serves 2.6 million patients. The Center for Nutrition and Weight Management is a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence that also offers non-surgical weight loss support and a variety of different bariatric procedures. It specializes in offering patients a comprehensive program of multidisciplinary care with a focus on patient support and long term engagement.

Geisinger offers team-based, comprehensive network of care that addresses medical, psychological and psychosocial needs of enrolled patients. It also provides a team coordinator and counseling on insurance access. Multidisciplinary staff members of the Geisinger program include:

- Obesity Medicine Specialist– Doctors specializing in nutrition and weight loss
- Registered Dietitians – Diet and nutrition specialists in Bariatrics and Weight Management
- Clinical Nurse Specialists – Coordinate patient medical treatment plans and education
- Nutrition Research Coordinators – Manage research data
- Exercise coordinators – Develop specialized exercise plans
- Physician Assistants – Manage patient care
- Behavioral Health Specialists – Conduct behavioral health evaluations
- Bariatric Surgeons – Perform weight loss surgeries
- Insurance coordinators
- Bariatric Surgical Nurse Coordinators – Coordinate surgical treatment plan, care and education

Throughout the bariatric surgery assessment and intervention process, Geisinger has criteria to ensure that patient needs are identified and care is managed by professionals qualified to support specific goals. For example, with the support of Geisinger’s multidisciplinary team, bariatric surgery patients are required to:

- Stop smoking
- Read a preparatory book and complete behavior modification modules
- Attend 3 educational classes
- Attend 2 patient support groups
- Determine metabolism
- Undergo a behavioral medicine evaluation
- Undergo a medical evaluation
- Undergo a surgical evaluation
- Undergo a nutritional evaluation
- Patients are also encouraged to achieve a modest preoperative weight loss

For patients entering the program, Geisinger offers an integrated approach that develops a partnership among the patient, patient's family, doctors, nurses, and nutrition and exercise specialists. The process begins with an individual, comprehensive assessment and development of an intervention plan. The team works with patients to develop individualized meal plans for their specific lifestyle, set wellness/fitness goals, identify behavior modification techniques, and support them with weight loss medications or surgery. Behavioral health issues are a particular area of emphasis. All patients are seen at least once by a Geisinger psychologist pre-operatively and as needed post-operatively. Psychologists also play an integral role in Geisinger pre- and post-operative support groups.

Geisinger treatment is based on the premise that obesity is a long term disease – one that requires lifelong treatment. In keeping with this philosophy, Geisinger emphasizes to patients that bariatric surgery is a long term commitment that requires the patient to be an active participant. Support groups hosted monthly are intended for patients at all stages of the bariatric surgery process, including both the early pre-operative and late post-operative patients. Support group meetings are led by a rotating multidisciplinary staff including registered dietitians, registered nurses, physician assistants, psychologists, exercise experts, internists, and surgeons. Geisinger Center reports an appreciable post-operative turn out at support groups and other non-mandatory functions.

Geisinger also offers “Back on Track classes” run by psychologists, registered dietitians and exercise experts to help redirect patients who have had bariatric surgery but are plateauing or slipping in weight loss goals or have started to gain back weight. The program motivates patients through extra accountability and education, including involvement in educational seminars and support groups.

Finally, the Geisinger Center for Nutrition and Weight Management works to educate primary care practitioners (PCPs) at the 42 primary care sites under the Geisinger umbrella. The goal is to ensure PCPs are able to identify severe obesity patients and are aware of the resources available to help this patient population. Professionals from across the spectrum of disciplines at the Geisinger Center rotate going out to various PCP sites for “meet and greets” and to offer lectures to staff at these locations. The Geisinger Center also offers an annual CME conference to educate PCPs about “state of the art” of weight management and bariatric surgery issues as well.

Web: <http://www.geisingerbariatrics.com/index.php>

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