

PPO

Best Practices

Assuring Successful
Bariatric Surgery
Outcomes



PPO BEST PRACTICES FOR ASSURING SUCCESSFUL BARIATRIC SURGERY OUTCOMES

ISSUE BRIEF

CASE STUDY: HEALTH PARTNERS

HealthPartners (HP)– founded in 1957 – is a Minnesota-based, consumer-governed, nonprofit healthcare organization. HP and its related organizations provide insurance and healthcare services to its members. The group’s mission is “to improve the health of our members, our patients and the community.”

HealthPartners’ bariatric surgery program encompasses both clinical preparation and complementary telephonic support, with an increased focus on the lifestyle components that lead to a successful surgery outcome. The overall program emphasizes patient engagement through pre-operative requirements and through a post-operative support system that encourages ongoing patient support and self management.

HealthPartners incorporated telephone-based support into the overall bariatric preparation model in June, 2007 as a way to ensure that all members – regardless of where they have surgery – have the same level of baseline education. The phone course does not replace any clinic visits or requirements; rather, the intent is to supplement usual care and reinforce that information. To date, over 2600 members have participated in the program.

Program participation begins with a referral into the program by the member’s surgical team. Surgical teams are limited to HealthPartners Designated Bariatric Provider network. Providers must meet comprehensive selection criteria to be included in the network. HealthPartners maintains a high level of communication with the surgical groups, and as such, receives high satisfaction from surgeons regarding this added service.

The goals of the phone program include:

- Improve outcomes and promote patient safety for members having weight loss surgery.
- Empower members and patients for long-term success in weight loss treatment.
- Enhance member satisfaction.

Once referred for surgery, patients participate in a course titled A Call to Change... Healthy Lifestyles, Healthy Weight® Weight Loss Surgery Edition. The course is facilitated by a team of coaches, including registered dietitians and health educators with diverse backgrounds (e.g. exercise specialists, psychology/counseling), and includes five coaching calls prior to surgery. The phone program continues with at least four sessions after surgery. Topics covered in these sessions include eating before and after surgery, emotional eating, physical activity and exercise, risks and benefits of surgery, stress management, problem solving, and relapse prevention.

Patients enrolled in the course also receive a course workbook, a pedometer, a weekly weight chart, a food and activity journal, an exercise plan, and an action plan specifically designed for each patient.

Motivation for engaging in the phone program varies and is difficult to assess. Many clients want as much information and support as they can get prior to surgery and some begin the course simply because it is a component of the pre-operative checklist. However, by completion of the course, the majority of participants

are impressed with the program and thankful it was available to them. Coaches meet people where they are to develop concrete strategies for successful outcomes post-operatively. The last course efficacy audit found that, on average, pre-operative course completers lost seven pounds (or about 2.5 percent of total body weight) during the course, increased body image satisfaction by 74 percent and nearly 90 percent were taking recommended daily multivitamin supplements.

Website: <http://www.healthpartners.com/portal/1.html>

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