

Dear Bariatric Surgery Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the Good Samaritan Hospital Bariatric Surgery Program. As an American Society for Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence, we are committed to providing you a comprehensive bariatric surgery program. We offer excellent surgical options, complemented by structured and multidisciplinary, pre-surgical and post-surgical education, as well as monthly bariatric support group meetings. Our team approach will help you to achieve your lifelong weight loss goals, ultimately improving your quality and quantity of life.

Carefully read over the enclosed information outlining our bariatric surgery program.

It is **your** responsibility to confirm whether or not bariatric surgery is a covered benefit on your insurance policy. This can be accomplished by calling the healthcare benefits specialist/coordinator through your employer's human resource department **and by calling the customer service telephone number on your insurance card**. When confirming benefits, it may be helpful to refer to the specific surgical procedures below:

- LapBand® (laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding) procedure code 43770
- Laparoscopic Roux-en-Y gastric bypass procedure code 43644
- Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy procedure code 43775

Request that a current copy of your policy on the surgical treatment of morbid obesity (ICD 9 code 278.01) be mailed to you. ****Be certain to document specifics of all telephone calls (what day and time did you call, what is the full name of the person you spoke with, what is their direct telephone extension, what did they say, etc.).**

If you do not have bariatric surgery as a benefit and you complete a consultation visit with the surgeon, you will be billed for the office visit if the request for payment is denied by the insurance company.

It is important that you understand what the additional out-of-pocket costs will be for your surgery. Different insurance companies cover professional fees, surgeries and hospitalizations at different percentages. You may be responsible for a deductible, a percentage of charges, and/or a maximum out-of-pocket amount. Your healthcare benefits specialist/coordinator at your human resource department and the customer service department of your insurance company should be able to provide you with this information.

Below outlines the medical necessity criteria and a variety of diet history documentation for bariatric surgery. We strongly encourage you to review and confirm these criteria with your insurance company.

Body Mass Index (BMI) criteria (see BMI chart on brochure):

- BMI >35 with life threatening co-morbidities (for example: diabetes requiring medication, high blood pressure requiring medication, coronary artery disease, obstructive sleep apnea, debilitating arthritis)
- BMI \geq 40 with or without life threatening co-morbidities

Documentation of past diet history criteria (see weight loss history list):

- Non-supervised / self-supervised weight loss
- Supervised weight loss for **3, 6 or 12** consecutive months
- Medically-supervised weight loss for **3, 6 or 12** consecutive months
- Weight loss documentation must be from the most recent **1, 2 or 5** years

The remainder of this letter outlines the specific requirements of our bariatric surgery program that must be completed prior to scheduling your surgery. Please complete the registration packet that is included with this letter. You will need to bring the completed packet with you for your first office visit with Dr. Kerlakian. During this visit:

- You will either attend a patient information seminar or watch a DVD/video of our patient information seminar; this will ensure you are prepared to make an informed decision about having bariatric surgery. It will provide a comparison of surgical procedures and a description of the risks, complications, and benefits associated with bariatric surgery.
- Dr. Kerlakian or Dr. Tymitz will review and discuss your past medical and surgical histories to be certain there are no contraindications for surgery and to determine if you have any individual risk factors.
- You may be referred to see a specialist for cardiac clearance, pulmonary clearance, a sleep study test, or any other testing or other specialists as determined necessary.

At the completion of your visit with Dr. Kerlakian, you will have the opportunity to enter our program. Some patients are ready to commit that day and others need additional time to make this lifelong decision. To enter our program, you must pay our \$575.00 program fee. This fee is **non-refundable and it is not billable to your insurance company**. The fee covers all the **non-physician** pre-surgical and post-surgical assessments and education (dietician, exercise physiologist, mental health, and nursing). Once you pay your program fee, you will be scheduled for the pre-surgical diet and exercise assessment and class to prepare you for the lifestyle changes necessary for success following bariatric surgery. You will also be scheduled for the pre-surgical mental health assessment to determine your readiness and preparedness for the lifestyle changes following bariatric surgery. These appointments are available every week to assure timely availability. Once all appointments are completed, our goal is to have your request for surgery to your insurance company within one week. Depending upon the timeliness of your insurance company, we can have your surgery scheduled as early as one month upon completion of all appointments.

Once surgery is approved, our office will contact you to schedule your surgery. You will have one more office visit with Dr. Kerlakian to sign your surgery consent. You are required to bring a family member or support person with you for this appointment to witness the signing of the surgery consent. You will also be scheduled to attend a pre-surgery class (our nurse will go over what to expect with hospitalization and our dietician will go over the two week pre-surgery diet and initial post-surgery diet). In addition, sometime during the week before your surgery, you will need to have a pre-surgical history and physical completed by your primary care physician and pre-admission testing completed at Good Samaritan Hospital (includes completion of hospital paper work, any necessary additional blood work or testing, and anesthesia assessment).

Thank you again for your interest in the Good Samaritan Hospital Bariatric Surgery Program. We look forward to providing you with excellent care and to being partners during your life-long journey with weight loss. If you have any questions, please call our office at (513) 862-4957.

Sincerely,

Bariatric Surgery Team
Bariatric Surgery Program
Good Samaritan Hospital

8/24/11