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Contacts: Michael Leathers Office: 217-788-7086 Pager: 217-467-2252
Lori Harlan Office: 217-788-3593

Memorial's Bariatric Program Named Center of Excellence

SPRINGFIELD – Memorial Medical Center has been named a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS).

“Bariatric programs designated as centers of excellence by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery must meet the highest quality standards for bariatric surgical patient care,” said Charles D. Callahan, PhD, vice president of operations for Memorial Health System. “This honor recognizes the hard work and dedication of our bariatric services team as they provide high-quality care to our patients through our comprehensive program that addresses the unique medical, emotional and social issues that accompany bariatric surgical care.”

Eleven Illinois hospitals have been recognized as a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence by the ASMBS. Nine are in the greater Chicago area, and one is in Peoria.

Memorial Bariatric Services has performed nearly 450 bariatric surgical procedures since it was established in 2002. An estimated 200 bariatric surgeries are expected to be performed at Memorial Medical Center this year.

“Rates of obesity are steadily growing in our community and across the nation,” according to Rebecca Anderson, PhD, director of Memorial Bariatric Services. More than one in four people in Illinois are obese, and an estimated 6 percent have morbid obesity. Morbid obesity is closely correlated with a number of serious conditions that severely undermine the health of overweight patients, including heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

“Bariatric surgery is by far the most effective treatment for significant and durable weight loss for persons with severe obesity, but it requires comprehensive, expert care from an experienced team of surgeons and other medical professionals. Achieving this designation communicates that we have this level of care in place,” Anderson said. “As we fulfill our mission to improve the health of the people and communities we serve, our designation as a bariatric center of excellence reaffirms that we meet the highest standards of safety, efficacy and sensitivity in the surgical treatment of severe, life-threatening obesity.”

The surgeons who lead the team are Max Hammer, MD, medical director of Memorial Bariatric Services, and Orlando Icaza, MD. Both are affiliated with Springfield Clinic.

Patients receive care before, during and after surgery from a dedicated team of healthcare professionals that includes nurses, dietitians, social workers, clinical psychologists and physical therapists. Memorial offers three types of bariatric procedures: laparoscopic Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding and laparoscopic vertical sleeve gastectomy.

Nationally, the number of bariatric surgeries has grown from 16,000 procedures performed in 1992 to 170,000 performed in 2005, according to a 2007 report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Faced with clinical evidence that the most experienced and best-run bariatric surgery programs have by far the lowest rates of complications, the ASMBS Bariatric Surgery Centers of Excellence program was created to recognize bariatric surgery centers that perform well and to help surgeons and hospitals continue to improve the quality and safety of care provided.

For more information, call (217) 788-3948 or toll-free at (866) 205-7915 or visit MemorialBariatricServices.com.

Memorial Medical Center, 701 N. First St., is a nonprofit, community-based hospital in the Mid-Illinois Medical District at Springfield. For more information about Memorial Medical Center, visit ChooseMemorial.org.

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