

Physician-supervised weight loss program procedure

For BCN commercial and BCN AdvantageSM members

Goal

To identify BCN members who may meet the criteria for a bariatric surgery referral. This procedure will describe the documentation that is required by Blue Care Network in order to proceed with the medical determination about whether the initial referral will be approved.

Medical criteria

1. **Age range:** 18 to 60 years of age. Requests for bariatric surgery for patients under 18 years of age should include documentation that the primary care physician has addressed the risk of surgery on future growth, and on the patient's maturity level, ability to understand the procedure and comply with postoperative instructions, and adequacy of family support. Patients over 60 years of age may be considered if it is documented in the medical record that the patient's physiologic age and comorbid conditions result in a positive risk/benefit ratio.
2. **BMI** greater than 40 or a BMI greater than 35 with one or more comorbid conditions (such as degenerative joint disease, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, coronary artery disease, presence of atherosclerotic diseases, diabetes mellitus, sleep apnea or congestive heart failure).
3. **Clinical evaluation by M.D./D.O.:** The patient must have undergone multidisciplinary evaluation by an established bariatric treatment program to include medical, nutritional and mental health evaluations to determine ultimate candidacy for bariatric surgery. Such an evaluation should include an assessment of the patient's likely ability and willingness to cooperate effectively with a rigorous post-operative program. This should include documentation of past participation in a nonsurgical weight loss program. The nonsurgical program participation and multidisciplinary evaluation must have occurred sometime in the four years prior to the date of surgery.
4. Documentation that the primary care physician and patient have a good understanding of the risks involved and reasonable expectations that the patient will be compliant with all postsurgical requirements. (Indicate on *Bariatric Surgery Assessment Form: Patient Referral Information*.)
5. Psychological evaluation must be performed by a contracted mental health professional to establish the patient's emotional stability and the patient's ability to comprehend the risk of surgery, to give informed consent and to cope with expectable postsurgical lifestyle changes and limitations. This evaluation must be performed as a presurgical assessment. Providers should contact BCN Utilization Management at 1-800-392-2512 to request a referral for the psychological evaluation.
6. Physicians need to be aware of the long-term complications of gastric surgery and follow up with these individuals.
7. If the original surgical procedure is revised, documentation is required for the date and type of the previous procedure; the factors that precipitated the failure; and the complications from the previous procedure that necessitate the take-down. If the indication for the revision is the failure of the member to lose a desired amount of weight, the member must meet all of the preoperative criteria for the original procedure.
8. For members who had a sleeve gastrectomy as part of a staged bariatric surgery, the member must at the time of the request for the subsequent bariatric surgery meet all the criteria listed in this document (that is, the BMI and obesity-related comorbid conditions, the psychological evaluation, etc.), except the member need not have participated in a professionally supervised weight loss program. For members who did not participate in a professionally supervised weight loss program, however, there must be documentation in the physician's record that indicates the member has complied with the diet guidelines that were required after the sleeve gastrectomy.

BCN Behavioral Health contact information (for behavioral health interventions):

- Providers should use a phone number shown on the [Provider Inquiry Contact Information](#) document.
- Members should use the phone number on the back of their ID card.

Questions? Providers can contact BCN Utilization Management at 1-800-392-2512 for assistance.