

Dear Patient:

Thank you for your interest in the Surgical Weight Loss Program at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation. It was a pleasure getting to meet you. As we discussed, there are several evaluations and tests that we require before we can make a decision to pursue a surgical procedure for you. Our goal is to assist you in your pursuit of long-term health and sustained weight loss. The purpose of this letter is to clarify for you what needs to be done next, and to help you make those arrangements should you decide to proceed with gastric bypass surgery.

## **Insurance Issues**

### For Patients with HMO or Point of Service (POS) Insurance plans:

Coverage policies for gastric bypass procedures varies with each insurance, but in all HMO and POS plans, prior authorization must be obtained in writing before any of the services described below should be obtained. Insurance companies require the following conditions be met before they consider providing financial coverage of gastric bypass operations.

- 1) Clinical necessity, a body mass index (BMI) of  $\geq 40$  or 35-39 if certain medical conditions are present, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, severe asthma, or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).
- 2) *Documentation of participation in medically supervised weight loss programs, including attempts within the past 12 and preferably within the past 6 months. Typically, this must come from your primary physician.*

We will request authorization for pre operative evaluations from your insurance company, including nutrition, mental health, and pre-operative testing. Please do not schedule these evaluations until you have received written authorization for these services from your insurance company, or you may be financially responsible for the associated fees. Once these evaluations have been completed, Dr Anwar will review those reports. If surgery seems appropriate, he will submit a request to your insurance company to cover the surgery itself and will schedule a mutually agreed upon date for the procedure. This authorization for surgery must be obtained in writing from the insurance company in advance of the surgery date itself, and this office will initiate that process. If your insurance company denies coverage for any services, we will review appropriate options with you.

### For Patients with PPO Insurance plans:

Typically, the above information applies to PPO insurance plans as well, but may not need prior authorization for everything. You will need prior authorization for the surgery itself.

## **Nutritional Services**

We ask that you see a **licensed dietitian (nutritionist)** at least three times before we even schedule surgery. This specialist will review your current dietary habits and help you begin to implement healthy dietary changes. In addition, you will learn detailed information about the expected dietary changes and guidelines following gastric bypass surgery. We have a dedicated group of licensed dietitians at PAMF. They offer group classes, as well as

individual appointments. A consult request has been placed to them on your behalf. Please arrange a consultation time with them by calling (650) 853-2961.

## Mental Health Services

Secondly, we ask that you see a **mental health specialist**. The purpose of this consultation is to help us determine if you have a good understanding of the post-operative expectations and goals of gastric bypass surgery in order to determine your suitability for the surgery. In addition, the specialist will evaluate you for any adverse psychiatric conditions or eating disorders that may contraindicate a surgical treatment at present. We have a dedicated group of licensed mental health specialists at PAMF. A consult request has been placed to them on your behalf. Please arrange a consultation time with them by calling (650) 853-2904.

## Pre-operative Testing

Finally, we ask that you obtain a series of typical pre-operative tests that include an evaluation of your heart, lungs, and gallbladder, as well as routine blood tests. The specifics are as follows:

- ❑ **EKG (Electrocardiogram)** – The EKG lab is on Level 2 in the Cardiology department. No appointment is necessary. The lab is open Monday-Friday 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM and Saturday 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM.
- ❑ **Blood Tests** – The laboratory is located on Level A. No appointment is necessary. The lab is open Monday-Friday 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. They already know what blood tests to perform. You do not need to be fasting unless otherwise instructed.
- ❑ **CXR (Chest radiograph)** – The Radiology department is located on Level A. No appointment is necessary for a chest film. The department is open Monday-Friday 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM and Saturday 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon.
- ❑ **Gallbladder sonogram (ultrasound)** – Please contact the Radiology department at (650) 853-2955 to schedule this test which will evaluate if you have gallstones. You will be given specific instructions by Radiology for this test. *If you have already had your gallbladder removed, then you do **NOT** need this test.*

Once we have collected all of the above information, we will contact you to discuss the results and make further treatment plans. If you have any questions or are having difficulty with any of the above, please contact us at (650) 330-4334.

Sincerely,

Haroon P. Anwar, MD