

## **INSURANCE & SCHEDULING PROCEDURES**

### **PRE-OPERATIVE PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT FOR BARIATRIC SURGERY PATIENTS**

Pre-surgical psychosocial evaluation is a standard requirement before patients undergo bariatric surgery. Nearly all insurance companies require psychosocial evaluation before they will authorize surgery. Unfortunately, insurance companies are very inconsistent about how they cover the pre-surgical assessment.

Although psychosocial evaluation is not required because of existing or suspected mental/behavioral problems, the mental/behavioral department of your medical insurance will likely authorize and pay for the evaluation. Certain insurance carriers will not pay for a pre-surgical psychosocial evaluation. In the event that your insurance policy does not allow coverage for this evaluation, please be aware that payment for your evaluation will be expected at the time of service.

The licensed mental health provider conducting the evaluation, should have office staff to help identify your insurance coverage for this evaluation. You may ask them to help you with this; however, it is critical that you take the steps required of you, including obtaining pre-authorization for the evaluation or arranging for payment at the time of service.

Psychosocial evaluations may be obtained at New Life Weight Loss Center by our Licensed Clinical Social Worker by calling Kristi Sierzega, LCSW, CADC, for an appointment at 618-988-6171 Ext. 35757.

### **PLEASE GIVE A COPY OF THE GUIDELINES INCLUDED WITH THIS PACKET TO YOUR PROVIDER**

**Please note:** Some providers may require a referral prior to scheduling your evaluation. Our office is unable to provide this referral until after you have completed your initial consultation with your surgeon. Your primary care physician may be willing to issue this referral for you prior to your consultation in our office.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL EVALUATION INFORMATION**

Please find a list of providers who are available to provide evaluations, pre-operative psychotherapy, and follow-up psychotherapy. All have had experience with bariatric patients and the bariatric assessment procedure. However, each provider is unique in how they perform their evaluation and what they charge for their services. You may want to ask questions about the amount of time needed to complete the evaluation and what the normal or typical fee is associated with the service. Also, if there are other providers you would like to complete your evaluation and do not find his/her name listed, please contact New Life Weight Loss Center to ensure that your evaluation will meet the requirements of the program/ insurance requirements.

**Gordon Plumb, PhD, PsyD**  
**Monika Plumb, LCPC, PhD**  
800 West Main  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
Tel: 618-529-2273  
Fax: 618-549-8321

**Frank Kosmicki, PhD, PsyD**  
231 West Main, Ste 1W  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
Tel: 618-203-6730  
Fax: 618-529-3171

**Lydia A Williams, PhD**  
Integrity Clinical Network  
4230 Lincolnshire Drive, Ste E  
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864  
Tel: 618-242-4205  
Fax: 618-242-4209

**Sage Psychiatry, LLC**  
410 W. St. Louis St.  
West Frankfort, IL 62896  
Tel: 618-937-1111

**Poorva Talapatra, LCPC\*\***  
Shawnee Health Care  
400 South Lewis Lane  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
Tel: 618-519-9200  
Fax: 618-519-9961

**Kristi Sierzega, LCSW,  
CADC\*\***  
New Life Weight Loss Center  
317 S. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Herrin, IL 62948  
Tel: 618-988-6171 Ext 35757  
Fax: 618-988-6174

**\*\* Accepts Patients with  
Commercial Insurance,  
Medicare and Medicaid  
Coverage (excludes IlliniCare)**

**Naeem Qureshi, MD**  
Southern Illinois Psychiatry  
112 Airway Drive  
Marion, Illinois 62959  
Tel: 618-998-0888  
Fax: 618-993-1808

**\*\*Medicaid patients can be seen  
by Dr. Qureshi at:**  
Anna Rural Health  
513 N Main Street  
Anna, IL 62906  
Tel: 618-833-4471  
Fax: 618-833-7959

**\*NOTE: Dr Qureshi's offices  
require a referral before they  
will schedule patients. We  
cannot send the referral until  
after your initial visit with the  
surgeon. Please let our staff  
know if you would like a  
referral to this provider.**

Dear Licensed Mental Health Provider:

New Life Weight Loss Center requires that all potential patients seeking weight loss surgery complete a bariatric psychosocial screening evaluation. These evaluations must be done by a licensed mental health provider, unless an alternate provider is approved by the surgeon and meets the patient's insurance requirements.

As no standard evaluation tool exists for bariatric screening evaluations, we would like to make the following recommendations regarding the interview process to help focus on those issues we commonly see as pitfalls to success in weight loss surgery patients. We would like you to address these particular issues in your interview process.

- Reporting or displaying of adverse psychiatric conditions that might contraindicate surgery such as severe depression, severe neurosis, or severe behavioral eating disorders. These conditions should not be active at the time of the evaluation. Controlled condition, even those on medications, are acceptable and should be documented.
- The patient should be able to describe the physical aspects of the procedure and be able to have an active discussion regarding the long- and short-term risks and benefits of the operation. They should also be able to outline realistic expectations regarding post-operative plans, recovery and outcomes. If they are unable to do this, it is important that we know this from your evaluation.
- Assessment should be given to the support systems of the patient. Are adequate support systems in place in order to help the patient through the recovery process? Any barriers to adequate support, or the patient's unwillingness to seek therapy as a result of issues that occur from weight loss should be noted.
- The patient should also be able to verbalize negative outcomes associated with non-compliance with the program. A history of medical non-compliance should also be assessed, addressed, and documented as appropriate.
- The patient should also be able to verbalize that weight loss surgery will likely not improve issues such as negative body image and diminished self esteem. Education should be given on behaviors that are commonly experienced that may benefit from additional psychological assistance in the post-operative period.

While the ultimate responsibility for weight loss surgery rests in our hands and those of the patient, your recommendations for the patient's success are critical. In this evaluation report, we must see from you, in writing, one of the following statements:

- ***Clearance from psychosocial evaluation for surgical weight loss.***
- ***Clearance from psychosocial evaluation for surgical weight loss with recommendations: Include recommendations and follow-up plan.***
- ***The patient will need to be reevaluated before psychiatric clearance is given for the surgical evaluation. The patient must complete the following recommendations before the reevaluation can occur: Include recommendations and follow-up plan/reevaluation schedule.***
- ***The patient is NOT given clearance for surgical evaluation for the following reasons or concerns:***

Please support your recommendations with documentation from the interview and evaluation. A dictated report is appreciated as opposed to hand-written notes. Common recommendations for patients that we see include mandatory attendance in bariatric support groups, additional therapy sessions to work on specific issues that may affect the patient's success, letters from primary care physicians noting the patient's compliance with medical therapies, completion of a relapse prevention plan, etc.

**Our office requires a full evaluation. Reports received that contain only a few sentences and state "the patient is cleared for bariatric surgery" will not be accepted. Also, reports that include only scoring from the evaluation of standardized tests will not be accepted.**