

***** **High Priority** *****

Service Alert Notification

Subject: First Coast Advantage (FCA) Authorization Process for Bariatric Surgery Consults and Evaluation of UF Weight Loss Clinic

Date: January 12, 2011

Effective December 1, 2010, Bariatric Surgery Consultation and Evaluation were added to the First Coast Advantage Pre-Authorization List. Currently, the UF Bariatric Surgery Department at Shands Jacksonville is the only Bariatric Surgery Provider accepting FCA Members.

The following is a list of information required for a pre-authorization to Bariatric and the Mandatory steps for an evaluation for Bariatric Surgery.

Pre-Authorization Procedures for Bariatric Surgery Consultation and Evaluation:

- PCP submits a prior authorization request to FCA for a consultation and evaluation by Dr. Sharma.
 - Referrals will only be accepted from the Member's PCP.
 - Specialist referrals will be redirected back to the PCP.
- The following are the eligibility criteria for a consultation and evaluation by bariatric surgery and must be included with an authorization request:
 - Age: 18 years or older
 - BMI: ≥ 40 /kg/m; or
 - BMI: ≥ 35 with at least one of the following morbidities:
 - Type 2 DM
 - Hypertension (140-159 / 90+)
 - Gastroesophageal reflux disease
 - Obstructive sleep apnea
 - Osteoarthritis
 - Coronary artery disease/congestive heart failure/hyperlipidemia
 - Total Cholesterol >200 mg/dl
 - LDL >160 mg/dl
 - HDL <50 mg/dl (women) <40 mg/dl (men)
 - Triglycerides > 200 mg/dl
 - Idiopathic intracranial hypertension
 - Continued obesity despite efforts to lose weight
 - Documentation by the PCP in the Member's medical record of the following:
 - Member's compliance with the PCP's plan of care.

- Member was informed of and initially enrolled in a 6-month PCP supervised weight loss program. This 6-month program starts with the initial visit to Dr. Sharma.
- Member was informed of the need to stop smoking and provided with information and assistance with smoking cessation.
- Member was informed of mandatory attendance at Dr. Sharma's informational seminar, prior to consultation with Dr. Sharma.
- If a complete pre-authorization request is received by FCA, it will be reviewed by the FCA preauthorization staff.
 - When the Member meets criteria for consultation, the authorization number will appear on the FCA Web Portal 5 days after all documentation has been received.
 - When the Member does not meet criteria for consultation, a denial will be processed. The PCP and the Member will be notified in writing of the denial. The denial will appear on the FCA Web Portal.

Bariatric Surgery Consultation and Evaluation by Dr. Sharma:

- Dr. Sharma will provide the Member with a prescription for laboratory studies during the initial consultation. If H. Pylori is identified, it will be treated by Dr. Sharma, per the current best practice recommendations. A repeat H. Pylori testing will be performed with preadmission testing.
- Dr. Sharma will request that the Member's PCP provide medical clearance for surgery. Dr. Sharma will send a copy of the preliminary laboratory testing with any treatment recommendations to the PCP.
- Based on individual patient needs, Dr. Sharma will recommend to the PCP any additional laboratory testing, consults and procedures that will be necessary prior to medical clearance.

Mandatory Steps in the Evaluation Process:

- Six (6) month weight loss program supervised by the PCP.
 - Serial patient weights should be documented monthly over a 6-month period by the PCP.
 - Dr. Sharma's "Medical Weight Loss Form" (form attached) must be completed and submitted to Dr. Sharma's office.
 - If the Member is unable to be weighed at the PCP office, they may be weighed at Dr. Sharma's office.
 - Member must demonstrate at least a **15 pound** weight loss over the 6-month weight loss program to be considered for surgery.
- A Mental Health evaluation by an FCA approved Psychiatrist or Psychologist (see list below). A Nurse Practitioner may not complete the Mental Health evaluation. Dr. Sharma's office will make this appointment.
- Smoking Cessation Counseling. The Member must completely stop smoking for 3 or more months to be considered for Bariatric surgery. Smoking cessation will be randomly monitored by Dr. Sharma's office to assure compliance.
- At least one consultation with the bariatric nutritionist. Prior to the surgery date, the Member must pay \$55 co-pay for the nutritionist consultation.
- Medical clearance for surgery must be submitted by the PCP. Specialist referrals for medical clearance to the cardiologist, pulmonologist and/or other specialist may be made by the PCP or by Dr. Sharma.
- Documentation of attendance at Dr. Sharma's Bariatric Informational Seminar is required.
- Documentation is required of a Negative H. Pylori or a positive H. Pylori result for which the patient has been adequately treated.

Bariatric Mental Health Evaluation Guidelines:

- A licensed Psychologist or a Psychiatrist must document the following Member characteristics:
 - Absence of any behavioral health risk factors that preclude a successful treatment outcome.
 - Absence of a major, uncontrolled or unstable psychiatric disorder
 - Absence of a history of substance abuse, or documentation of abstinence from substance(s) for a minimum of one year.
 - Ability and motivation to comply with required dietary, medical, and surgical preoperative and postoperative treatment plans.
 - Ability to cope with anticipated post-surgical conditions that result from the surgery.

Recommendation of Mental Health Options:

- Cleared for surgery
- Not cleared for surgery at this time, with future clearance dependent upon successful course of treatment and reevaluation by appropriate mental health provider
- Not cleared for surgery and unlikely to be compliant with or to respond to treatment program

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